FREDERIC;

OR,

THE LIBERTINE.

FREDERIC,

OR THE

LIBERTINE;

INCLUDING

MEMOIRS

OF THE

FAMILY OF MONTAGUE:

A NOVEL.

——*Garrit aniles*
Ex re fabellas.—— HORACE.

The chearful Sage, when ſolemn dictates fail,
Conceals the moral counſel in a Tale.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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FREDERIC;

OR,

THE LIBERTINE.

CHAP. I.

CONTAINING THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS AUTHENTIC AND IMPORTANT HISTORY.

THE Author of the following work is inclined to flatter himſelf with hopes, that he has merited the favour of mankind, ſhould he fail of it; having endeavoured to fix the

minds of his readers to the contemplation of human manners, and the interſting ſcenes of common life, that they might find a reſemblance of themſelves, and thoſe around them. And while he aimed to amuſe the fancy, approach the heart, and engage the paſſions, he has been ſtudiouſly attentive to bring his obſervations home to the buſineſs and boſoms of ſocial beings, in order to baniſh the influence of temptation, reſtore the power of conſcience, and rectify the underſtanding: ſtrongly enforcing the firſt principle of moral rectitude, that, in the purſuit of pleaſure and happineſs, we are never to depart from the paths of virtue and honour. As a moraliſt, therefore, he hopes he ſhall be diſmiſſed by his readers with reſpect, if not with applauſe.

At

At a pleaſant village in the northern part of the kingdom, there lately lived a gentleman of conſiderable fortune and influence, whoſe name was Montague, not more eſteemed for his affability and benevolence, than revered for his integrity and virtue.

Though born to an inheritance which gave him a claim to diſtinction, he was inſtructed in his youth, by the precepts of ancient experience, to employ the bleſſings of affluence to the purpoſes of happineſs and humanity: hence, when death levelled his anceſtors with the duſt, and he became aggrandized by their poſſeſſions, and illuſtrious by the credit of their virtues, he had the wiſdom to relinquiſh public honours, and to content himſelf with private dignity; ever pleaſed and happy to enjoy life in the

eaſe of opulence, without parade or oſtentation; and it was his ſupreme delight to extend his beneficence, and render himſelf beloved by all to whom he was known; while his magnanimity led him to do good, and avoid evil, without reſpect to the opinions of men.

Thus, having confined his views within the calm region of domeſtic felicity, he gave not into the infatuation of moſt men of fortune, who, from miſtaken ideas of human dignity, frequently deſtroy their private eaſe, through the uncertain purſuit and precarious tenure of court preferment; for he knew, that there is no happineſs in life equal to freedom, nor any ambition beyond that of having no ſuperior, eſpecially in a country where the laws only, and not the will of the

the magiſtrate, claim our ſubmiſſion. Hence, he endeavoured to avoid becoming a ſlave; for while he depended on himſelf, he was ſatisfied neither the ſovereign nor his miniſters could give him any moleſtation. Notwithſtanding this, he moſt truly revered his king and country, but choſe that his actions ſhould be free, in order to enjoy the pleaſing ſatisfaction of ſerving both without the expectation of reward, or the painful circumſtance of being influenced by fear.

His benevolence and univerſal philanthropy, conſpired to give him conſtant opportunities of indulging his generous heart in two prevailing inclinations, viz. relieving the diſtreſſes of the injured and indigent, and reconciling litigious feuds and animoſities among his friends and his neighbours;

in the laſt of which, he always endeavoured to promote reciprocal good will, by inculcating that noble principle of moral rectitude, which teaches us to treat others, as we naturally wiſh them to behave to ourſelves. In ſhort, he was a plain, honeſt, country gentleman, whoſe continued acts of beneficence and humanity, bore the ſtrongeſt teſtimonial of his poſſeſſing a truly good heart; preferring ſimplicity of manners, and the generous frankneſs of *Engliſhmen*, to the ridiculous and ſervile politeneſs of a neighbouring nation, where tyranny and abſolute government prevail.

His conduct was juſt and proper upon every occaſion; he diſdained to fawn on thoſe in more exalted ſituations than his own; and he was too liberal to inſult or triumph over thoſe below

below him. As he poſſeſſed the means, he wanted not the inclination to ſupport the old, *Engliſh* hoſpitality; but his viſitants never purchaſed his bounty at the expence of their religion or loyalty; a conduct too frequently practiſed by the opulent over their dependants. He was a good chriſtian, and a good ſubject of the community, in every action of his life diſcovered an honeſt inclination, which is a more uncommon quality than a competent apprehenſion.

At the age of three and twenty, he married the daughter of a worthy gentleman, between whoſe family and his own the moſt friendly intimacy had been ſupported for a long ſeries of years. This lady was exceedingly beautiful in her perſon, and poſſeſſed all the amiable and ſocial virtues,

blended with an enchanting vivacity and affability of diſpoſition. Genuine and diſintereſted love was the foundation of this union, which ſoon gave birth to reciprocal eſteem and immutable friendſhip. Their ages were nearly equal, and as both were formed by nature for domeſtic happineſs, they experienced that bliſsful ſatisfaction the virtuous ſeldom fail of enjoying; and which is only unknown to thoſe who do not purſue the proper means of attaining it.

Mr. Montague had five children by this lady; a ſon and four daughters. But, alas! that inſtant of time which gave birth to the laſt of theſe, fixed the period of Mrs. Montague's life.--- The loſs of ſo amiable a partner, rendered her affectionate huſband inconſolable, till the neceſſity of attending to

to the education of his children, obliging him to diſſipate ſorrow, and reaſſume that tranquillity of mind he had ever enjoyed before this diſtreſsful circumſtance happened.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINING WHAT IS FULL AS NECESSARY TO BE READ AS THE CONTENTS OF THE FIRST CHAPTER, THOUGH THE AUTHOR FEARS THE READER WILL NOT FIND IT MORE ENTERTAINING.

MR. MONTAGUE's immutable love of his wife, had imprinted the idea of her ſo ſtrongly in his mind, as to lead him, though in the prime of life, to reject all thoughts of a ſecond marriage.---Such affectionate remembrances are, undoubtedly, founded on very delicate ſenſations, but did they univerſally prevail,

ſociety

ſociety would experience an evident injury. For however the advocates for delicacy of ſentiment may admire the principles on which ſuch ideas depend, it requires but a ſmall ſtock of philoſophy to prove the evil tendency of them, and, therefore, they do not merit encouragement; becauſe, whatever tends to impair our intellectual vigour, or alienate our hearts from the common intereſts of mankind, ought to be conſidered as an offence againſt the immutable and eternal decrees of providence.

Mr. Montague endeavoured to inſtruct his children with the affection of a father, rather than with the authority of a parent; not that he ſuffered the partiality of the former to enfeeble the importance of the latter, whenever neceſſity required the exerciſe of it; but

but he apprehended, gentleneſs and love were more likely to inſpire attention, than when ſubmiſſion is extorted by the iron rod of ſeverity; and, that, while they ſuffered no fearful apprehenſions from reſtraint, they would liſten to his precepts, and reſign themſelves to his wiſhes and injunctions with unreſerved ſincerity. It is certain that, inſtruction is always beſt received, and ſinks deeper in the minds of youth, in proportion to the manner in which it is conveyed. When documents are delivered as matters of amuſement, they are imbibed with pleaſure, and held in eſteem; for though we are deſirous of acquiring knowledge, there is a kind of pride in human nature which frequently prevents our confeſſing the want of it: this is more particularly the vanity of early age. Hence it is,

that

that the moſt experienced and judicious, have found the neceſſity of inſinuating with mildneſs, inſtead of obtruding with moroſeneſs, in their endeavours to convey inſtruction; agreeable to the precept of Horace,

Simul et jucunda et idonea dicere Vitæ.

He intruſted his ſon to the care of the Curate of the pariſh, to be inſtructed in the learned languages; but at the age of ſixteen ſent him to the univerſity of Oxford, that he might extend his ſtudies by cultivating an acquaintance with thoſe liberal ſciences which exalt human nature, and inſtruct us in whatever is important to ourſelves, and beneficial to the intereſts of ſociety.

His

His daughters were initiated into thoſe rational accompliſhments, which correſpond with the ſtanding maxims of domeſtic prudence, and encourage the practice of virtue, as the probable means of guarding againſt idleneſs, that dangerous enſnarer of the ſoul, with her corrupted train of attendants. In ſhort, it was his wiſh that his children ſhould be good, rather than be what the world falſely ſtiles great; and as he had a plentiful fortune to beſtow upon them, he was deſirous they ſhould endeavour to be worthy of it.

After his ſon (whoſe name was Frederick) had been at the univerſity ſomewhat more than a year, he was permitted to viſit his family during one of the vacations. While he was at home, he became captivated by the perſon of a young lady in the neighbourhood,

bourhood, who was exquiſitely beautiful, and nearly of his own age. He had known her from his infancy, having been frequently taken to her houſe by the Curate, while he was under his tuition; but no intimacy had ever ſubſiſted between their parents, her father being a man of diſſolute principles, and ſo different in the whole tenor of his conduct from Mr. Montague, that he held him unworthy of his acquaintance.

Miſs Brumpton (for that was her name) had little to recommend her but the beauty of her perſon, in which nature had been uncommonly liberal; for as her mother had died while ſhe was at an early age, and her father's whole life was a continued ſcene of diſſipation and profligacy, little attention had been paid to her education and morals.

It

It was reported in the village, that the Curate had addreſſed her as a lover, a conſiderable time before young Montague returned from Oxford, and it was not without foundation, but this matter was concealed from him; for ſhe was one of thoſe politic females, who think it beſt to have two ſtrings to their bow. The Curate had courted her ſometime, it is true, but he had not propoſed marriage, and Frederick had the advantage of him in reſpect to age and perſon; for he was a beautiful youth, remarkably tall, and manly in appearance beyond his years; to which ſhe added the importance of his family connection, and the certainty of his being a man of fortune. All theſe conſiderations were placed in the balance againſt the merits of the Curate, and it ſoon preponderated in favour of our hero.

Her

Her old lover beheld the change without much concern; nay, indeed, rather acquieſced in it, having carried on the intimacy full as long as was agreeable; and, therefore, he conſidered this circumſtance as a lucky hit, that would enable him to ſlip his neck from a collar, he had reaſons to apprehend might prove troubleſome to him in future. On this account, he favoured young Montague's wiſhes, regardleſs of conſequences, and loſt to that generoſity and gratitude which was due from him to Frederic's father, for repeated acts of favour and friendſhip.---He ſoon declared his indifference to the young lady, which made it neceſſary for her to be aſſiduous in embracing every opportunity of ſecuring an intereſt in the affection of her new lover.

CHAP. III.

PROPER TO BE READ
BY ALL MASTERS AND MISSES,
JUST ENTERED INTO THEIR TEENS.

YOUNG Montague's affection for Miſs Brumpton increaſed daily, but as the time drew near when he was to return to the univerſity, the thought of being obliged to leave the object of all his wiſhes behind him, greatly embarraſſed and diſtreſſed his mind. His wonted chearfulneſs forſook him; he "*pined in thought*;" and became ſo diſtracted with doubt, fear, and ſolicitude, as to be unable to conceal the ſituation of his mind from his

his father, who very tenderly inquired into the cauſe of it.---Frederic was yet unpractiſed in the arts of deceit and falſehood; and if he had not been ſo, he well knew the danger of playing them off upon a man of his father's diſpoſition. However, he ingenuouſly diſcloſed the true ſtate of the caſe, without heſitation, or reſerve, and concluded all with a requeſt, that, inſtead of returning to the univerſity, he might be permitted to remain at home, and conſummate his wiſhes by marrying Miſs Brumpton.

Mr. Montague was ſhocked with this diſcovery, and, for a time, unable to make any reply; however, the importance of the affair ſtruck him ſo forcibly, that he ſoon recovered from his ſurpriſe, and addreſſed himſelf to his ſon in the following manner.---

" My dear Frederic, what you have juſt mentioned has affected me greatly, and I ſhudder at the requeſt you have made. I will not oppoſe it with the authority of a father, but with the advice of a friend. This is a ſudden ſtart of juvenile inclination; a ſpontaneous emotion of the ſoul; and it is at too early a time of life for you to indulge it. I therefore rather pity than condemn you for it. If you reflect ſeriouſly, the imprudence and folly of this precipitate engagement, will be too obvious for you to heſitate one moment what ſtep you ought to take. I confeſs that Miſs Brumpton's perſon is beautiful in the extreme, but if you are wiſe, you will not pay that attention to beauty which is alone due to virtue. She has no fortune, but that would have little weight with me, did I not diſapprove of your choice

from

from other motives, and conſider it improper for you to think of matrimony at ſo early an age. Her family connections are deteſtable, for the diſſolute and abandoned conduct of her father is horrible to ſerious reflection. What hazard, therefore, will you not run, ſhould you marry the daughter of ſuch a man? for it is almoſt impoſſible ſhe can have imbibed any favourable ideas of moral rectitude. The proſpect of ſuch an union is dreadful, and ſhould you purſue it, you will probably find it contribute very little toward your felicity.---I feel for you to my ſoul, becauſe I know what it is to be under the influence of ſuch impreſſions as you muſt experience. I alſo know, that a lover, following the firſt impulſe of his paſſion without conſideration, always fancies himſelf on the verge of ſupreme and unabat-

ing happineſs; and, therefore, if he is influenced by the advice or interpoſition of others, not to purſue his own inclinations, he generally concludes that his felicity has been prevented by ſuch means. On this account I will not enforce my advice with ſeverity, but only requeſt that it may recall you to a ſelf-examination.---O, my dear boy, this affair is of the utmoſt importance, for upon it reſts your future welfare and happineſs. It calls for the aid of all the philoſophy you are maſter of; it demands the utmoſt efforts of reſolution. Conſider your age; conſider how much remains for you to do, before you poſſibly can make any conſiderable progreſs in thoſe ſtudies it is neceſſary you ſhould purſue for your own reputation, and the acquiſition of that knowledge which will render you important to ſociety,

and

and contribute to your happineſs in this life.---I do not mean to diſſuade you from matrimony;----it is the ſtricteſt union of perpetual friendſhip between the ſexes, when entered into under the auſpices of mutual attachment, and deliberate reaſon. It is a ſtate truly deſirable; and it is the duty of every man to engage in it once, at leaſt, from the obligations he owes to the community.---Its felicities and infelicities are numerous; and as the former depend upon much caution and conſideration, reſpecting the choice of a proper object, ſo the latter are the almoſt certain conſequences of a contrary conduct. You have turned your thoughts on marriage too ſoon; it is rather a misfortune than a crime; and therefore I moſt willingly pardon it. Do not think me ſevere, my dear Frederic, that I endeavour to check

this firſt ſally of juvenile indiſcretion; time will convince you I am right. Return to Oxford; purſue your ſtudies; and when you have made that progreſs I wiſh you to make, you ſhall have my free conſent to turn your thoughts on a wife. I will not then attempt to lay any reſtraint on your inclinations; you ſhall be at full liberty to look around you, and when you meet with an object agreeable to your wiſhes, even the want of fortune ſhall be no objection, provided ſhe is a woman of virtue. I have enough to make you and your ſiſters happy; and, once for all, be aſſured, I live but for the happineſs of my children.--- If you reject my counſel and purſue your own inclinations, you will forfeit all claim to my favour and protection; and ſhould you, by an imprudent conduct, fall a prey to vice and folly, and thereby

thereby become the child of miſery and misfortune, I will not promiſe that the juſtice due to tranſgreſſion may not reſtrain the inclinations of benevolence and humanity. Be wiſe---be virtuous---and be happy:"

———" The time of life is ſhort:
To ſpend that ſhortneſs baſely were too long,
Though life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at th' arrival of an hour."

SHAKESPEAR.

Here Mr. Montague ended his lecture of admonition and advice, to which Frederic could only make ſubmiſſion by bowing, for his confuſion of mind and the fulneſs of his heart, on this check to the indulgence of his wiſhes, deprived him of the power of ſpeech.---It was agreed that he ſhould ſet out for Oxford the next

next morning, which he accordingly did; having firſt written a letter to Miſs Brumpton, by his father's direction, wherein he acquainted her, that their intimacy was diſcovered, and as it was not agreeable to his father, he was under the neceſſity of declining it.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE LIBERALITY OF GOOD ADVICE IS SELDOM PRODUCTIVE OF THE INTENDED EFFECT.

FREDERIC's tacit ſubmiſſion to his father's advice, and the willingneſs he diſcovered to return to Oxford, inclined Mr. Montague to believe, that by checking the affair of his ſon's amour in its infancy, he had effectually put a ſtop to it.—— Alas! how frequently are we deceived by appearances! The gentleneſs of the father's admonition, ought to have inſpired generoſity and reſolution of obedience in the ſon. But this was not

not the caſe; for on the tenth day after his departure, Mr. Montague received a letter from his preceptor, acquainting him, that a few days after the young gentleman arrived at the univerſity, he was viſited by a friend; who, after having reſided with him three days at his apartment, had been diſcovered to be a woman in man's apparel; and that in conſequence of his being reprimanded for the imprudence of his conduct, he had eloped from college with ſuch privacy, as to render all ſearch after him fruitleſs and ineffectual; and it was ſuppoſed the lady was the partner of his flight.

The receipt of this letter gave Mr. Montague inexpreſſible uneaſineſs; and as he very naturally concluded his ſon's female companion might be Miſs Brumpton, he was preparing to ſend

ſend to her father's to be ſatisfied of it, when Mr. Corbett, the Curate, arrived with the news of her having eloped in a ſuit of her brother's cloaths, the day after Frederic ſet out for Oxford, and, as it was imagined, in purſuit of him.

" Well," ſaid Mr. Montague in tears, " the boy has deceived me, and I pray to heaven that he has not deceived himſelf. It is a raſh action; but his youth and inexperience plead ſome excuſe, and as it is his firſt fault, I will not blot him from my remembrance. He yet may be ſaved; and it will be a neglect of my duty as a parent, not to attempt it. I will endeavour to recall the faithleſs fugitive. He may not be loſt in hopeleſs degeneracy, though for a while he forgets the regard due to the advice and authority

thority of a father. Youth is the ſeaſon of folly and miſtake; and it is no uncommon thing, even for a generous mind to be backward in ſuſpecting its own weakneſs."

The Curate remarked, that it was highly probable the fugitives had taken their route for Scotland, in order to be married; and if ſo, they would return in a ſhort time penitentially imploring forgiveneſs, as was uſual in ſuch caſes. He therefore adviſed waiting a few days, before any ſearch was made after them; for if they had purſued this ſtep, it was then too late to prevent their union.

Mr. Montague, though a good man, was well acquainted with the depravity of human nature, and hence differed from the Curate's opinion, reſpecting

ſpecting their being gone to Scotland to ſecure a clandeſtine marriage. He remarked, that as Miſs Brumpton had been ſo imprudent as to follow his ſon to Oxford, and remain with him three days in his apartment, after ſhe had been acquainted he was forbid to continue his intimacy with her, that there was little reaſon to ſuppoſe he would marry her. "However," ſaid this good man, "if he has taken an ungenerous advantage of her weakneſs or partiality for him, he ſhall marry her, let the conſequence be whatever it may; for I had rather ſee him unfortunate than diſhonourable."

As the Curate had ſuggeſted that they might be gone to Scotland, Mr. Montague waited a fortnight before he formed any reſolution reſpecting a ſearch after them; but when that time

time was elapſed, and nothing had tranſpired as to their ſituation, or the ſtep they had taken, he concluded they had made London the place of their reſidence; and that though it was likely, the fear of being diſcovered might have tempted them to change their names, he imagined they might eaſily be met with in ſome of thoſe gay circles of pleaſure to which young people, emancipated from the reſtraint of ſuperiors, and the invariable amuſements of a country life, generally reſort with great eagerneſs.

The next ſtep was to fix on a proper perſon to go in ſearch of them; for Mr. Montague concluded it would be improper for him to undertake that taſk, from an apprehenſion, that the ſenſe of ſhame and the dread of puniſhment, might prevent his ſon from

from diſcovering himſelf ſo willingly to him, as to a more indifferent perſon.

The Curate generouſly offered his ſervice, and Mr. Montague gladly accepted of it; in conſequence of which he ſet out for the capital, as ſoon as he had procured a clergyman to officiate for him during his abſence. Mr. Montague gave him a hundred pounds to defray his expences, and another hundred for the uſe of his ſon, in caſe it ſhould be wanted to extricate him out of any difficulty, though he had given him fifty pounds over and above his ſtipend for college expences, the day he left home.

Mr. Montague deſired the Curate would act with great caution and moderation in every ſtep he took; and, above all, that in caſe he found his

ſon, he would aſſure him of receiving pardon, provided he inſtantly returned to the univerſity. Mr. Corbett promiſed to obey his orders with the ſtricteſt punctuality, and forthwith ſet out for London.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

CONTAINING,
AMONGST OTHER PARTICULARS,
A VERY MELANCHOLY INCIDENT.

MR. CORBETT returned from London, after a ſtay of one month, without being able to procure the leaſt intelligence of young Montague, or his fair companion; though he had repeatedly perambulated the moſt principal parts of the town, and made the ſtricteſt enquiry after them throughout the cities of London, Weſtminſter, and their environs. He had likewiſe frequented the theatres, and every place of public amuſement,

and inſerted deſcriptive advertiſements reſpecting them in the prints of the day. —All this, and more, had the Curate done, as he informed Mr. Montague, the expences of which amounted to the ſum of ninety-ſeven pounds, ſix ſhillings and five pence; whereupon he returned one hundred pounds, and the balance of the other; after which Mr. Montague preſented him with fifty pounds for his trouble, notwithſtanding his labour had not been ſucceſsful, and was perfectly ſatisfied of his diligence and fidelity.

It is ſometimes greatly to be regretted, that hiſtorians are obliged to ſpeak truth; for though it reflects credit to themſelves, it is a ſpecies of reputation not very deſirable, becauſe it is frequently obtained to the diſadvantage of others, as in the caſe in point. We are unwilling to forfeit our

our integrity to the Reader, and therefore think ourſelves bound to declare, that the Curate was poſſeſſed of more policy than honeſty; for from the firſt moment he ſet out on the expedition mentioned in the laſt chapter, he determined in his own mind to make the moſt of it. In purſuance of this plan, he conſulted every prudent method in the execution of the buſineſs, and reſolved not to purſue any expedient for finding the fugitives which ſhould be likely to prove expenſive. In ſhort, he did not proceed in the manner he informed Mr. Montague he had done, becauſe it was not neceſſary, as will appear hereafter, neither had he expended the ſum he charged; for the whole of his expences amounted only to ſeventeen pounds, four ſhillings and three pence; ſo that he had actually purloined eighty pounds, two ſhillings and two pence; and this was

diſguiſed with ſo much plauſibility and artifice, as to paſs without detection; but this will not appear a matter of ſurpriſe when we remark, that Mr. Montague was a man of too nice honour to be capable of ſuſpecting the integrity of others.

Mr. Montague propoſed advertiſing his ſon by name, as the Curate's ſearch after him had proved ineffectual; but Corbett diſſuaded him from that ſtep, by obſerving, that it was highly probable he had changed his name, and therefore it was a plan not likely to be attended with ſucceſs. He further remarked, that as it was probable he had made London the place of his retreat, his money would ſoon be exhauſted in the ſupport of himſelf and his companion, and as want would unavoidably bring on diſtreſs, he would ſoon be compelled to diſcover himſelf. Several months however paſſed, without

out any diſcovery being made as to the ſituation of the fugitives, notwithſtanding that every ſtep was taken to accompliſh it which probability ſuggeſted; and hence Mr. Montague became apprehenſive ſome uncommon or dreadful circumſtance had happened; and conſidering his ſon as loſt for ever, to him at leaſt, his mind became diſtreſſed in the extreme, which ſoon brought on a fixed melancholy; and death, which puts an end to all human pleaſures and ſorrows, in a ſhort time determined the number of his days.

CHAP. VI.

THE SHORTEST IN THE WHOLE BOOK; CONTAINING A DYING-SPEECH, EULL AS MELANCHOLY AS A FUNERAL SERMON.

THE death of Mr. Montague was greatly lamented by every perſon to whom he was known. The rich loſt a worthy neighbour and friend, and the poor a liberal benefactor. Not a face was ſeen in the village on which unfeigned ſorrow was not ſtrongly imprinted, nor an eye that did not drop a grateful, tributary tear to the memory of his virtues: but this was natural, for death generally increaſes our veneration for exalted characters.

A ſhort

A ſhort time before the moment of expiration, Mr. Montague requeſted his daughters might attend his bedſide, when he addreſſed himſelf to them in the following manner:

" My dear children, I perceive that the end of my life is at hand—I do not repine at it, becauſe I know it is the will of Heaven. Had length of days been allotted me, I ſhould have employed them to your benefit, by teaching you the great importance of virtue; and my knowledge of the world might have guarded you from evil and contributed to your happineſs, the only conſiderations that could make life deſirable to me: as it is, you muſt do the beſt you can for yourſelves. Your brother, I fear, is no more—he has dealt unkindly by me and you. His conduct was imprudent and ungenerous; but no more of that;

I am

I am bound to forgive him. I have made ſome proviſion for him, in caſe it ſhould appear that he is alive, but it is not what I ſhould have left him, had he behaved agreeable to my wiſhes. He has been obſtinately diſobedient, and not to puniſh his tranſgreſſion, would be placing virtue and vice upon the ſame footing. Your fortunes are increaſed on this account; and as you will find them exceed your expectations, I moſt earneſtly requeſt you to be ſtudiouſly attentive in employing them to the important purpoſes of benevolence and virtue, without which you muſt never expect to be happy.—Your dear mother was an amiable woman. She ſupported her ſituation in life with great dignity, and I am happy in perſuading myſelf you will imitate her laudable example.—Ever have it in remembrance, my dear children, that no happineſs can be

be ſecure or laſting, which has not its foundation in virtue; and that there is no conſideration in life worthy the ſacrifice of it. May the providence of the Almighty guard you from the perils and misfortunes of this world. Be wiſe—be virtuous—and be happy!"

As ſoon as the good man had pronounced theſe words, he cloſed his eyes, and breathed the groan of expiration.—At the ſight of this laſt conflict, the young ladies appeared to feel the moſt piercing ſorrow, and expreſſed the utmoſt violence of diſtraction; but as the particulars of ſo melancholy a ſcene are eaſier imagined than related, we ſhall leave the mourners for the preſent, that they may have an opportunity of indulging their grief, and here put an end to this chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL BE MADE ACQUAINTED WITH MR. MONTAGUE'S TWO DAUGHTERS, AND TWO OTHER VERY IMPORTANT PERSONAGES IN THIS AUTHENTIC HISTORY.

IT is natural for children to love their parents, and this love renders the firſt loſs of them almoſt inſupportable; becauſe it recalls a thouſand pleaſing endearments, which before paſſed without much impreſſion; and theſe lead them to wiſh for their return, that they may renew that happineſs they never rightly underſtood, and, conſequently, never properly enjoyed.

Violent

Violent ſorrow is ſeldom laſting. The young ladies did not ſuffer their grief to be eternal. The ſtorm ſubſided in a ſhort time and a gentle calm ſucceeded. The painful occurrence of their father's death, loſt moſt of its importance and horror on the peruſal of his will, wherein it appeared, that the whole of his fortune, which conſiſted of upwards of ſeventy thouſand pouuds, was to be equally divided between them, after the payment of a few legacies, and a reſerve of five thouſand pounds only, for their brother, in caſe of his being alive.

Mr. Montague had four daughters, as has been obſerved in a former chapter. The eldeſt, whoſe name was Charlotte, was juſt of age at the time of her father's death. The ſecond, whoſe name was Emily, was about a year younger; the third, whoſe name

was

was Harriet, was nineteen; and the youngeſt, whoſe name was Sophia, was in her ſeventeenth year.

Charlotte had not only the advantage of her ſiſters reſpecting years, but likewiſe reſpecting beauty of perſon. She was rather inclined to tallneſs of ſtature; her ſhape was unexceptionable, her eyes piercing, her complexion clear and delicate, her countenance ſingularly expreſſive of ſenſibility, and the *tout enſemble* of her perſon was highly captivating. She was naturally diſpoſed to be grave, yet there were times when ſhe poſſeſſed great vivacity. She was either a ſtranger to the importance of her perſonal charms, or if conſcious of her ſuperiority in this particular over the generality of her ſex, ſhe was untinctured with that vanity which ſuch a ſuperiority uſually creates.—Reading and muſic

muſic were her principal amuſements, to which ſhe paid great attention, when the concerns of the family gave her an opportunity, for ſhe had for ſome years conducted her father's domeſtic affairs.

The beauties of Emily's perſon nearly equalled thoſe of her ſiſter Charlotte. Her complexion was fair, and her cheeks were beautifully tinged with a ſweetly-pleaſing bloom. Her form was extremely delicate, but her features were rather too much in miniature. She was generally conſidered a pretty woman, but neither her temper or diſpoſition were in any reſpect ſimilar to her eldeſt ſiſter's; for ſhe was proud and obſtinate, vain of her perſon, and ſtrongly inclined to indolence and a love of pleaſure.

Harriet

Harriet wanted neither beauty or good ſenſe. She was not miſtreſs of Charlotte's ſolidity and diſcernment, but ſhe poſſeſſed an underſtanding far ſuperior to her ſiſter Emily. Her temper was open and generous; ſhe had uncommon vivacity, was ſingularly ſuſceptible of the tender paſſions, and her ideas in general were extremely romantic.

Sophia had not been particularly favoured by nature on the ſcore of beauty, yet her perſon and features were what might be termed agreeable. Her diſpoſition was meek and affable, ſerious and compaſſionate. She was ſenſible of her ſiſter Charlotte's ſuperiority of underſtanding, and ſhe had the wiſdom to ſubmit herſelf to her advice and direction upon every occaſion.

Mr.

Mr. Montague had by his will left theſe young ladies to the care of a brother and ſiſter of his wife's, having no relations of his own; and they were appointed his executors, and guardians to his children.—The brother was a bachelor, and the ſiſter an old maid; both in the poſſeſſion of a conſiderable fortune, and remarkable for their contrariety of diſpoſition.

The brother's name was Cecil. He had been bred to the law, and was called to the bar; but his father dying and leaving him in the poſſeſſion of a very conſiderable fortune, juſt as he was entering into practice, from a laudable delicacy, he relinquiſhed the emoluments of the long robe, and preferred a country retirement to popular obſervation.—He was a man of an accompliſhed underſtanding, a ſcholar, and a gentleman, in the moſt un-

limitted ſenſe of the word, and his principles were extenſively liberal.

Mr. Cecil poſſeſſed one of the moſt happy diſpoſitions enjoyed by human beings, that of being pleaſed with himſelf and every thing around him, the bleſſed reward of a virtuous, contented and benevolent mind. And hence it was that he preferred the ſilent, uncorruptive amuſements of rural life, to thoſe gay circles of pleaſure about the metropolis, where vice and folly reign with tyrannic ſway, and diſſipation and licentiouſneſs, in the habiliments of innocence and virtue, contaminate the primary ſources of human felicity.

His retreat from buſineſs aroſe principally from a diſguſt with the practice of the law; partly owing to its perplexity and chicanery, and becauſe it

it frequently obliged its profeſſors to prey upon the diſtreſſes of the injured and the indigent. But let not the Reader imagine his retreat was the effect of indolence; for he thought it the duty of every man to render himſelf uſeful to ſociety, and though he preferred a country life to a town life, he was ſtudiouſly attentive to render himſelf important to his friends and his neighbours, and he frequently was ſo. And as his mind was turned toward the innocent and ſedate ſatisfactions peculiar to retirement, he had no reliſh for thoſe boiſterous and adventrous recreations ſo prevalent amongſt the generality of country gentlemen. He was not ambitious of acquiring fame by leaping over hedges and ditches. Nature had not formed him for ſuch arduous undertakings; and he uſed to conſider the admirers of ſuch dangerous amuſements, as a

ſpecies of beings having a nearer affinity to their dogs and horſes than to the human race.—He was alſo a profeſſed enemy to every kind of gaming, and often declared, that he ſaw no wiſdom in the connection and dependence of certain black and red ſpots imprinted on fifty-two pieces of ſtiff paper, commonly called a pack of cards; or any dexterity in rattling two little ſquare bones in a cylindrical box, five inches deep and two inches diameter, to give laws to the different arrangements of a parcel of black and white pieces of wood in an oblong box, known by the name of a back-gammon-table.

We would not, however, have the Reader ſuppoſe he was equal to no gratifications, becauſe he delighted not in ſuch kind of amuſements. He had a reliſh for the more ſublime pleaſures of

of knowledge, friendſhip, and a good conſcience. Neither was he was ſo recluſe as to ſecret himſelf from the company of men of ſenſe; for he knew that converſation is as neceſſary to ſupport the vigour of the mind, as food and exerciſe is to the health and ſtrength of the body.—He was naturally chearful; poſſeſſed of agreeable humour, and an admirer of innocent merriment. But even his gayeſt moments were unſullied by obſcenity. He loved a joke, but he never purchaſed it at the expence of another's diſgrace or uneaſineſs. He would frequently make himſelf merry with an oddneſs of temper, a peculiarity of behaviour, or ſingularity of thought or expreſſion in any of his friends, but his raillery never ſhocked or offended the perſon who occaſioned it; and, above all, he held it impious to diſplay his wit on

the guiltleſs infirmities or diſtreſſes of human nature.

Mr. Cecil had paid his addreſſes to a young lady in the early part of his life, but a difference happening between her father and his, reſpecting a county election, it was productive of an irreconcileable enmity, which prevented the union of the young couple. This diſappointment in his firſt attachment determined him to remain ſingle, though poſſeſſed of a fortune ſo very conſiderable, that the moſt reſpectable families in the county of York ſolicited his alliance. He ought to have married, and his not doing it was the only thing for which he was reprehenſible throughout life.—He lived within the diſtance of a mile from Mr. Montague's ſeat, though not in the ſame pariſh, accompanied by an only ſiſter, who

who was ſeveral years older than himſelf.—The character of this lady being truly ſingular, we ſhall preſent the Reader with a few *traits* of it, before we proceed any further with our hiſtory.

Miſs Cecil was in the forty-eighth year of her age at the time of Mr. Montague's death. Till the age of twenty, ſhe even ſurpaſſed her ſiſter Montague in beauty of perſon, when that fatal enemy to delicacy of features and complexion, the ſmall-pox, put an end to the triumph of beauty, by placing her on a level with the moſt homely of her ſex. Before this unfortunate calamity happened, ſhe had numberleſs admirers, but being vain and conceited in the extreme, ſhe only conſidered their ſighs and adorations as offerings due to her tranſcendant charms. And hence, though ſhe

gave encouragement to all, it was without the leaſt ſuſceptibility of paſſion, on her part, in favour of either; and ſhe indulged herſelf in a ſhameful and unpardonable tyranny, by keeping them all in ſuſpence, merely to gratify a paſſion ſhe delighted in, of having a numerous train of admirers, whom ſhe held in continual ſubjection, expectancy and alarm, by her frowns and her ſmiles, juſt as caprice or humour diſpoſed her. In ſhort, ſhe was a finiſhed coquette of the firſt rate; a character not many removes from every thing that is deteſtable.

Her perpetual cruelty, together with the loſs of that beauty which had enabled her to maintain her dominion, rendered her in a ſhort time as much forſaken and deſpiſed, as ſhe had been ſolicited and admired; for her unkindneſs and tyranny contributed, in idea,

idea, to improve the charms of many engaging females, who had been neglected on her account; ſo that her devotees ſoon returned to the abodes of generous love, and entered into honourable and happy unions with thoſe they had ſlighted or overlooked, while they paid their adorations to this haughty and imperious coquette.—She ſoon felt the change. Her former ſcorn and folly forſook her, while love, rage and reſentment ſucceeded. She ſaw her error when it was too late; and, in turn, experienced that diſtreſs of mind and heart-felt anguiſh, ſhe had made others feel. Her puniſhment was a matter of triumph to her enemies, and even her friends acknowledged the juſtice of it.

The loſs of that beauty which had rendered her ſo vain and fantaſtical, as to ſport with the affection and conſtancy

ſtancy of a train of lovers, gave a very different turn to her diſpoſition and conduct; for inſtead of being gay and inattentive, ſhe became ſerious and ſedentary. She renounced that ſex ſhe had gloried to torment; made a vow of perpetual celibacy, and being ſatisfied of her brother's intention to lead a ſingle life, ſhe reſolved to remain with him during the remainder of her days, and attend to his domeſtic affairs.

This ſudden change was by no means ſuitable to her active ſpirit. It ſoon rendered her gloomy, and whimſically ſuperſtitious. Her ideas became highly romantic, and ſhe delighted in every thing which appeared to be wonderful and marvellous. The ſtudy of aſtrology, the interpretation of dreams, the calculation of nativities, and the ſolution of ſigns and wonders.

became

became the objects of her ſtudies and amuſements; ſo that ſhe ſoon rendered herſelf as ridiculous, reſpecting theſe particulars, as ſhe had before been contemptible for her pride and coquetry.—Her brother, and indeed all her friends, lamented and experienced the bad effects of this new ſpecies of infatuation and folly, with as great concern and uneaſineſs as they had done reſpecting her former conduct.—Mr. Cecil frequently attempted to reaſon her out of her abſurd notions, but without effect, excepting that of fixing her attachment the more firmly to them; and when he found that to be the caſe, he reſolved to let her purſue her own inclinations; only he ſometimes made himſelf merry with the ridiculouſneſs of her conduct, in diſtracting the preſent moments and loſing the enjoyment of them, by a vain

vain and idle purſuit of what was to happen in future.—

On the death of Mr. Montague, Mr. Cecil and his ſiſter agreed that their nieces ſhould remain at their father's houſe till Sophia became of age, unleſs they all married before that time. It was alſo ſettled, that they ſhould not only keep the coach, but live in the ſame manner they had done in their father's lifetime, as the income of their fortunes was more than ſufficient for thoſe purpoſes. Mr. Cecil thought this would be the means of their living more happily, than if he had taken them home to his own houſe; for though their father had conſigned them to the care of him and his ſiſter, he was unwilling they ſhould be treated with any unneceſſary reſtraint, which he apprehended muſt have been the caſe, had they lived con-

conſtantly with their aunt. However, he generally viſited them every day, and directed the conduct of their affairs.

As ſoon as the young ladies had paid a proper reſpect to the memory of their father, they appeared in public, as uſual, and returned to their accuſtomed ſtudies and recreations.

As Charlotte and Sophia poſſeſſed congenial ſouls, they generally went hand in hand together in all their undertakings and purſuits; while a ſimilar alliance ſubſiſted between Emily and Harriet, though founded on very different principles. The firſt two delighted in the amuſements of reading and muſic, and they placed their higheſt felicity in domeſtic happineſs; while the latter two, profeſſed enemies to the pleaſures of retirement, ſought their

their amuſements beyond the limits of their own territories. But notwithſtanding this contrariety of diſpoſition in the two parties, they all agreed in whatever reſpected their common intereſt and happineſs, and lived together on the moſt ſocial and friendly terms.

Soon after the death of their father they had numberleſs admirers, attracted by their beauty, their accompliſhments, and their fortune. As their uncle well knew of this, he with the utmoſt tenderneſs informed them, nothing was more diſtant from his intention than to lay any reſtraint on their inclinations reſpecting marriage. All he requeſted was, that they would not enter into any matrimonial engagement without his knowledge and advice, at leaſt; which injunction Charlotte and Sophia promiſed to obſerve

ſerve with the ſtricteſt fidelity.—Emily and Harriet made the like promiſe, and reſolved to keep it——provided it laid no reſtraint on their own inclinations.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

MUCH SHORTER THAN THE LAST; AND AS IT CONTAINS NOTHING VERY NECESSARY TO THE PROGRESSIVE REGULARITY OF THE WORK IT MAY BE PASSED OVER, UNLESS THE READER CHOOSES TO PERUSE IT.

AS ſoon as Mr. Cecil had ſettled Mr. Montague's affairs, and eſtabliſhed a plan for the conduct of his nieces, he one day aſſembled them in the great parlour, where hung the portraits of their parents. Here he ſeated them round him, and addreſſed himſelf to them in the following words:

"My

" My dear nieces,—I am well perſuaded you are truly ſenſible of your ſituation. With reſpect to one particular, you have reaſon to wiſh it different from what it is. I allude to the loſs of your amiable parents. They were exalted characters, for it was the ſtudy of their lives to be good. Endeavour to imitate them, for ſure I am you need not ſeek for worthier examples. If you reſpect their memory, you will regulate your conduct by what you recollect of theirs. Accuſtom yourſelves to viſit thoſe lively images of what they once were *(here he pointed to the pictures)* it will recall them to your remembrance, and be the means of enforcing the importance of their virtues.—If you act as I wiſh, you ſhall find a friend and a father in me. I will make it my ſtudy to promote your welfare and happineſs, with as much zeal and integrity

as if you were my own children.—The loſs of your parents will, I truſt, endear you more firmly one to another, and that will unite you in the bonds of friendſhip and love. Your fortunes are equal, ſo that you have nothing to regret on that head. Have it always in remembrance, that to enjoy the gifts of fortune properly, you muſt guard againſt prodigality; otherwiſe you may not only deprive yourſelves of the pleaſures of life, but likewiſe of its comforts and conveniencies. You were conſidered as one by your indulgent parents; be therefore as one amongſt yourſelves, and as your tempers may not be exactly ſimilar, endeavour to comply and bear with one another, each making that allowance for the failings of the reſt, ſhe would wiſh them to make for her.—Shun vice and folly of every kind; and, above all, be careful never to make

neceſſity

neceſſity a plea for the loſs of integrity. All the virtues are imprinted in our hearts, but it is the practice of them which diſplays their beauty and enforces their importance.—The minds of moſt young women are corrupted by an inordinate love of pleaſure, and an extravagant paſſion for dreſs; or if they chance to eſcape the folly of theſe, as they come to riper years, gallantry and intrigue, and ſometimes gaming, cloſe the fatal account of ruin.—Do not value yourſelves too highly on the ſcore of perſonal beauty, for without the aſſiſtance of mental accompliſhments to ſupport its regency, it is a mere bauble.—Whenever you turn your thoughts on matrimony, be careful to place your affections on men of ſenſe and virtue, for fools or rakes will never contribute to your felicity. Neither let titles or riches tempt you to change your con-

dition, for theſe alone will be found inſufficient to ſecure contentment and happineſs.—Make choice of ſome agreeable and innocent ſtudies and amuſements, to avoid indolence, for of all vices that weakens virtue moſt. I have told you before, and I repeat it, I do not mean to lay you under any diſagreeable reſtraints, for there is a want of liberality in rendering thoſe we love either miſerable or uneaſy. On this account, I will not tire you with documents, for I am ſenſible there is nothing received with leſs pleaſure by young perſons than advice, which makes it very difficult to render it agreeable; but as I have touched on the ſubject of female vanity reſpecting beauty, and the folly of improper matrimonial connections thro' intereſted views, I will relieve your minds from the gravity of admonition, by the relation of a ſtory, the circumſtances

ſtances of which happened within my own knowledge." Mr. Cecil then related the hiſtory which the Reader will find in the two ſucceeding chapters.

CHAP. IX.

THE HISTORY OF BELLARIA AND FLORENTIUS.

BELLARIA was the daughter of a merchant in London. She was born a beauty; and through the folly and vanity of her friends, was taught to prefer the charms of her perſon to every other conſideration. Her father was what is uſually ſtyled a plodding man of buſineſs, and as the whole of his property was embarked in trade, he reſolved that his daughter's beauty ſhould be her only portion while he lived; not doubting but it would amply compenſate the deficiency of fortune. Under this idea, ſhe was educated

educated in the principles and manners of what is falſely called polite life; indulged in the utmoſt extravagance of dreſs, and inſtructed how to figure in the gay circles of faſhionable pleaſures and follies. In ſhort, ſhe was ſet out to the beſt advantage for ſale, to the higheſt bidder.

It muſt be confeſſed, her enchanting perſon rendered her the admiration of every beholder. Her knowledge of this increaſed her vanity, and heightened her father's ideas of her importance. At the age of ſeventeen, ſhe was courted by the ſon of an opulent tradeſman, who offered to marry her without a portion, being apprized of her father's reſolution, not to give up any of his property during his lifetime. This young gentleman was exquiſitely handſome in his perſon, amiable in his diſpoſition, and bleſſed

with uncommon mental excellencies: all which, however, were inſufficient to gain the affection of Bellaria, or intereſt her father in his favour. He was very ſoon requeſted to ceaſe his ſolicitations on the ſubject of marriage, and next to diſcontinue his viſits; for her father informed him he had *higher views*, and did not doubt but his daughter would marry a *Duke*, or a *Lord*, at leaſt.—The extravagance and folly of this declaration, convinced the young gentleman, that both Bellaria and her father were unworthy of his regard; and though his heart was prepoſſeſſed in favour of the daughter, he was fully convinced an union with a perſon of her vanity and miſtaken ideas of life, would defeat his hope of happineſs in the marriage ſtation. He therefore checked his paſſion while it was in his power, and leaving the vain beauty to indulge in the

the extravagance of ſelf-ſufficiency and her deluſive dreams of greatneſs, went in ſearch of an object more worthy his attention, and more rational in her views and expectations.—You, perhaps, continued Mr. Cecil, may have a wiſh to know how the young gentleman ſucceeded afterwards, and therefore I will interrupt the hiſtory of Bellaria for a few moments, to inform you, that ſoon after he quitted this haughty lady, he became enamoured with the only daughter of a gentleman of independent fortune, who, though ſhe could not diſpute the palm with Bellaria, reſpecting beauty, was what the world would call a pretty woman; and having been educated in the principles of virtue and good ſenſe, ſhe had the penetration to diſcover his worth and accompliſhments. She found his profeſſions were ſincere, and his intentions honourable; that he really

really was the man he appeared to be, and that his attachment to her was dictated by genuine and diſintereſted love. Her heart was free; ſhe admired his perſon and adored his virtues; but ſhe had the prudence to conceal her ſentiments of him, till time and obſervation convinced her he merited a confeſſion of her approbation. Her father approved of Orlando, for that was the gentleman's name, and ſolicited his daughter to encourage his addreſſes and make him happy. They were married in a ſhort time, and their union has been crowned with mutual and unabating felicity. But to return to Bellaria.

She had a numerous train of admirers, as I have remarked before, and amongſt the reſt, ſome of the firſt rank; but the honourable and right honourable gentlemen of thoſe days, did

did as their ſucceſſors do at preſent, never condeſcend to take a wife from the *city*, but on a principle of intereſt, generally to repair a ſhattered fortune with the marriage portion. Many of theſe purſued Bellaria with unremitting ardour, till they found her father did not propoſe to give her a marriage portion. As ſoon as this was known, the honourable troop vaniſhed, and left Bellaria and her father to repine at their diſappointment with ſhame and ſorrow.—At laſt, however, an elderly gentleman happening accidentally to ſit with Bellaria in the ſtage-box at one of the theatres, was ſtruck with the beauty of her perſon, and entered into converſation with her. He was a Knight of the Bath, and having his ſtar and ribbon on, her father, who was with her, concluded he was a man of the firſt faſhion; and ſuppoſing by his behaviour, that his daughter had made a con-

a conqueſt, was not willing to let the opportunity ſlip of giving her another chance for a huſband, and therefore made a bold puſh, and gave the gentleman an invitation to viſit his daughter, and dine with him the next day.

The invitation was accepted. He went at the appointed hour, and was entertained in a ſuperb manner. During the time of the repaſt, the father was extravagant in the praiſe of his daughter. The gentleman, blind to every thing but love, catched at the bait, made a declaration of his wiſh to enter into a marriage union with her, and offered not only to take her without a portion, but to make her a conſiderable ſettlement. In ſhort, he was ſo impatient to accompliſh this matter, that when he took his leave, he deſired they would come to a ſpeedy determination, and be prepared to

give

give him an anſwer the next day, when he propoſed to make them another viſit.

The father exulted in the lucky chance, and Bellaria thought it would be better to be a *Baronet's lady* than no lady at all; and, therefore, when Sir John Melville went the next day for their anſwer, the parties were agreed.—The marriage was conſummated as ſoon as the writings for the ſettlement could be drawn, and the wedding cloaths prepared.——Thus, through pride, folly and avarice, was one of the moſt beautiful women the world ever ſaw, ſacrificed to age, deformity and diſeaſe, for all theſe centered in the perſon of Sir John.—Horrid and unnatural as this connection muſt appear, the charms of a title, equipage, and the uſual appendages of a ſplendid ſituation, reconciled the young,

young, the gay, the thoughtleſs and the vain Bellaria to it.

Sir John was upwards of ſixty years of age at the time of this union, and the vain folly of an old dotard led him to exult in the ſucceſs of this conqueſt; but the reign of his triumph was of a very ſhort duration, for his inconſiderate imprudence and folly were ſoon ſeverely puniſhed.—Intereſt and pride had drawn Bellaria into an alliance with a man whoſe age and deformity rendered him odious to her, when conſidered as her huſband. It was impoſſible for her to love him; nor had ſhe gratitude to reward his unbounded generoſity with kindneſs, or even civility. The latter ſhe ought to have done, though her heart might deny its affection, becauſe her marriage was the effect of her own choice: but, alas! when once the mind can be reconciled

conciled to one illiberal action, another and another ſoon ſucceeds, and indiſcretion and imprudence of every kind ſoon become familiar and habitual.

Amongſt the number of Bellaria's gay ſuitors, before her union with Sir John, a Lord Bellamont was the only perſon ſhe particularly regarded. He had, like many others, addreſſed her on intereſted views, but when he found her father did not propoſe to give her a fortune in marriage, the neceſſitous ſituation of his affairs obliged him to relinquiſh his plan, though ſhe was the object of his affection. On the part of Bellaria, though a ſucceſſion of diſappointments had prevailed on her to give her hand to Sir John, the idea of Lord Bellamont was not to be removed. He was the idol of her ſoul; and the uneaſineſs ſhe experienced for the

the loſs of him, together with her averſion to Sir John, ſoon led her to reſolve on the renewal of her acquaintance with his Lordſhip, regardleſs of the conſequences which might follow. She wrote to him; and, without reſerve, related the particulars of her ſituation; drew a ſtriking picture of her affection for him, and her diſtreſs of mind on his account.—Their intimacy was renewed. His Lordſhip was a man of gallantry and intrigue, therefore conſidered Bellaria's marriage as a circumſtance likely to prove favourable to his lawleſs wiſhes.—He viſited her as often as opportunity permitted; but one evening when they were together, in the abſence of Sir John, the Baronet happened to return ſeveral hours ſooner than he was expected, and caught Bellaria ſitting on his Lordſhip's knee, with his arm round

round her waiſt, and her head reclined on his breaſt.

This circumſtance greatly ſurpriſed and aſtoniſhed Sir John; it inſtantly kindled the paſſions of jealouſy, rage, and reſentment. He reproached her in very ſevere terms, and forbid Lord Bellamont his houſe. Bellaria treated Sir John's reproaches with the higheſt contempt and indignation, and endeavoured to vindicate her honour; but this was done with ſuch confuſion, and in ſo unſatisfactory a manner, as ſerved only to confirm the Baronet in the juſtneſs of his ſuſpicions. Diſcontent and endleſs infelicity enſued; till at length Bellaria, ſtimulated by paſſion and hatred, and loſt to the ſenſe of ſhame, inſolently avowed her affection for Lord Bellamont, and her deteſtation of Sir John. Juſtly incenſed at this conduct, the Baronet de-

termined on a plan to puniſh her perfidy, and prevent all further intimacy between her and Lord Bellamont, which was, to take her by ſurpriſe, and in oppoſition to every perſuaſion and remonſtrance to the contrary, to convey her to a ſolitary manſion of his in Northumberland; where, after cloſely confining and properly guarding her to prevent an eſcape, ſhe ſhould be left to the horrors of reflection. The plan was executed with ſucceſs; but this unexpected check to the indulgence of her intimacy with his Lordſhip, provoked her revenge to the higheſt pitch. She wrote a letter to Lord Bellamont, acquainting him of her ſituation, and found means to get it conveyed to him; on the receipt of which, he ſet out with the utmoſt expedition for the place of her confinement, where, when he arrived, he gained admittance by bribery,

bribery, and ſoon prevailed on the ſervants to connive at Bellaria's eſcape, a circumſtance they readily conſented to, when they found there was more to be got by letting her go than by detaining her; ſo prevailing is ſelf-intereſt over the obligations due to fidelity and honour. But the follies and vices of the great generally corrupt the morals of their domeſtics; and when they have been taught to hold the precepts of honour in no eſtimation, there is little left to ſecure their integrity.

As ſoon as Lord Bellamont had procured Bellaria's liberty, he conveyed her to the capital by contrary roads, for fear of a diſcovery, and lodged her at the houſe of one of his dependants with the ſtricteſt privacy. He viſited her daily at this place, where, I am ſorry to tell you, they in-

dulged in a guilty intimacy. Their crime had its uſual conſequence; ſhe proved with child, and in proceſs of time was delivered of a ſon.

His Lordſhip judged it neceſſary to have the infant conveyed from its mother ſoon after its birth, to a place of ſecrecy, leſt, on a diſcovery of Bellaria's ſituation, it ſhould prove a witneſs of their guilt; and that he might not be further troubled with the child, he agreed with the perſons to whoſe care it was committed, to bring it up as their own, which was ſettled on the payment of five hundred pounds.

Soon after this, notwithſtanding his amour with Bellaria, his Lordſhip was detected in a criminal converſation with the lady of a noble Lord. This was productive of a duel between him and the injured party, in which the former

former loſt his life.—This fatal circumſtance involved Bellaria in the greateſt diſtreſs. Guilt, with all its horrors, ſtared her in the face, while diſgrace and ruin, with their terrific attendants, ſurrounded her on every ſide. The object of her wiſhes was no more; and the offspring of her incontinency, though living, was loſt to her, not being made acquainted at the time with the place it was conveyed to, and which ſhe never could diſcover, after the ſtricteſt enquiry.

Theſe accumulated diſtreſſes threw her into a ſtate of deſpondency, which at length brought on a dangerous illneſs, and having little hope of recovery, ſhe made her father acquainted with her ſituation: for from the time of her elopement from Northumberland, neither he nor Sir John had known any thing of her. This led to a

diſcovery of her imprudent and ſhameful conduct. Judge how this muſt affect a parent, already deeply diſtreſſed by the knowledge of her former infidelity, and the reproaches of her injured huſband, who, notwithſtanding her perfidy, had frequently expreſſed a regard for her.

The recollection of this, and the neceſſity of removing her from where ſhe was, inclined her father to ſolicit a reconciliation between her and Sir John, which he did in a few days, artfully concealing the continuance of her intimacy with Lord Bellamont, and placing the imprudence of her elopement, to the account of his confining her at his deſolate ſeat in Northumberland.

The Baronet was paſſionately fond of her before the diſcovery of her infidelity,

delity, and hence was eaſily prevailed on by her father to viſit her, after repeated aſſurances of the ſincereſt contrition, and a poſitive affirmation, that the diſtreſs of her mind on the occaſion, had been the ſole cauſe of her illneſs.—Love is ſaid to be blind; it proved ſo in the preſent caſe, for as ſoon as Sir John ſaw her, there was a ſtruggle between them which ſhould make the moſt conceſſions; and thus, this one meeting produced a perfect reconciliation, and ſhe returned home as ſoon as ſhe could be removed with ſafety.

The ſenſe of her guilt, and the Baronet's generous behaviour, determined her to make every atonement ſhe could for her paſt conduct; and though ſhe found it impoſſible to love him, ſhe endeavoured to render his life happy by repeated civilities, and continued

acts of compaſſion and kindneſs, reſpecting his age and infirmities. Theſe inſtances of gratitude and generoſity endeared her ſo much to him, that he made a will entirely in her favour, and at his death, which happened in leſs than a year after their reconciliation, ſhe found herſelf in the full poſſeſſion of his fortune and effects.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

THE HISTORY OF BELLARIA AND FLORENTIUS CONTINUED.

BELLARIA was only in the twentieth year of her age when ſhe became a widow, not being quite eighteen when ſhe married. She was now releaſed from a diſagreeable union with a man her heart never approved, and miſtreſs of an opulent fortune at her own diſpoſal. But, alas! neither of theſe circumſtances could check the ſtings of conſcious guilt, or repair the loſs of reputation, the greateſt calamities a human being can experience.

ence. Her infidelity to Sir John was no ſecret, though the particulars of it were not generally known: a tainted reputation is ever attended with fatal conſequences to the female ſex; for as it is ever more noticed in them than in the other ſex, it is always treated with greater ſeverity.

Bellaria paid but a ſhort tribute of feigned ſorrow to the memory of Sir John, ere ſhe began to think of another matrimonial engagement.—Her beauty was in its meridian luſtre; and ſhe conſidered its influence as irreſiſtible, eſpecially as it was now ſupported by the powerful alliance of an opulent fortune; hence, ſhe had not the leaſt doubt of making an important conqueſt in a ſhort time.

In order to render herſelf as conſpicuous as poſſible, ſhe new-modelled

led the ſyſtem of her domeſtic affairs; fitted up her town and country houſes in the moſt elegant and ſuperb manner, and heightened the pomp of equipage in every particular, which the extravagance of pride and folly dictated. Splendor was the idol of her ſoul, and pleaſure in the extreme the primary object of her purſuits.

She figured in the gay world, courting eſteem and adoration, but neither her expectations or wiſhes were crowned with ſucceſs; for thoſe who conſidered reputation and permanent happineſs ſuperior to every other conſideration, beheld her beauty with indifference, and heard of her opulence with inattention; and while her vanity was the conſtant ſubject of ridicule and contempt, her ingratitude and infidelity to Sir John, rendered her deſpiſed and deteſted by the virtuous part

part of mankind. Hence, ſhe was ſhunned by thoſe whoſe eſteem ſhe ſolicited, and only carreſſed by ſuch as ſhe knew to be influenced by intereſted views. However, as ſhe failed where ſhe was deſirous of ſucceeding, ſhe reſolved not to part with what ſhe poſſeſſed by marrying any one whoſe importance was unequal to the gratification of her paſſion for title and ſplendor. At length, being chagrined by repeated diſappointments and harraſſed by vicious propenſities, ſhe quitted London in a fit of diſguſt, and retired to her ſeat in the country, where ſhe gave a looſe to her paſſions, and degraded herſelf by criminal indulgencies with her own domeſtics. —This evinces the danger of giving way to vice in the early part of life; for it rarely happens, that either time or reflection eradicates the evil habits and corruptions contracted in youth.

The

The inconveniencies and inſult ſhe ſuffered from her imprudence, after a time, became almoſt inſupportable and without remedy. Her abandoned conduct placed her in the power of thoſe ſervants ſhe had ſeduced to her purpoſes; and ſhe loſt all authority over them by having ſacrificed her dignity to her paſſions. Thus, ſhe became the ſlave of inſolence and impoſition, and was reduced to the neceſſity of purchaſing ſubmiſſion and ſecrecy with bribes, and ſhe ſometimes found theſe inſufficient to ſecure either.—The horrors and ſolicitudes of ſhame and conſcious guilt, embittered thoſe moments ſhe might have enjoyed in tranquil happineſs, had ſhe never loſt ſight of prudence and virtue.

After leading this diſgraceful and deteſtable life till ſhe entered her fortieth year, ſhe found it impoſſible to extricate

extricate herſelf from the tyranny, impoſition and infidelity of her ſervants, but by marriage. This conſideration ſoon abated the nicety of her former wiſhes, reſpecting the exaltation of her importance, by marrying a man of title; as neceſſity, inſtead of inclination, compelled her to marry, at all events, to releaſe herſelf from a ſtate of anxiety and oppreſſion.

She quitted the country and returned to town, fully reſolved to change the condition of a ſingle life, with the firſt agreeable object that fell in her way, without reſpect to fortune or title; and it was not long before a circumſtance happened, which gave her an opportunity of carrying her reſolves into execution.

Happening to be at a public ball, a young gentleman was ſtruck with her perſon

perſon, and the elegance of her dreſs. Perceiving ſhe was without a partner, he in the politeſt manner begged her acceptance of his hand, a requeſt ſhe complied with, and they danced together the whole evening.

The young gentleman was only in the twentieth year of his age, but his perſon and deportment was extremely manly, and his figure was ſo ſingularly ſtriking, that he engaged the attention of Bellaria at firſt ſight; and being charmed with the politeneſs of his behaviour during the whole evening, ſhe reſolved to give him every encouragement to addreſs her as a lover, in caſe his affections were not already engaged.

When the ball was over, he deſired permiſſion to accompany her home, which ſhe readily granted, being determined

termined not to loſe ſight of him.—The ſplendour of her carriage, attendants and houſe, ſtruck him with amazement! Nothing particularly intereſting paſſed that night, excepting an exchange of compliments for the civilities of each other; but when he went the next morning to enquire after her health, ſhe received him with great affability and familiarity, and gave him an invitation to ſpend the day with her, during which ſhe made ſome diſtant enquiries reſpecting his ſituation in life, and particularly, whether he was married.

He informed her he was a ſingle man, of but little fortune, but in expectation of improving his circumſtance by marriage, to which his perſon was his principal pretenſion. This declaration was highly favourable to Bellaria's wiſhes; and being determined

termined to ſecure him, if poſſible, ſhe aſſured him his want of fortune would be no bar to her continuing an intimacy with a perſon of his polite accompliſhments, and therefore ſhe requeſted to ſee him as often as might be agreeable to himſelf.

This young gentleman's name was Florentius. Having never known his father, his mother, though in indigent circumſtances, had ſupplied this loſs by every attention to his education, intereſt and happineſs in her power; but an inordinate love of pleaſure from his infancy, joined to a vicious inclination as he grew up, had impeded that approach to reputation and opulence, which his abilities were capable of attaining; for nature had kindly bleſt him with uncommon faculties.

His mother, through the intereſt of friends, had placed him in a merchant's counting-houſe, very early in life; but his indolence, and attachment to vice, led him to pay little attention to buſineſs. At the age of ſeventeen, he was maſter of ſufficient art to ſeduce his maſter's daughter, about a year younger than himſelf, which being diſcovered, occaſioned his immediate diſmiſſion; but as his maſter regarded his mother for her amiable character, and knew her incapacity to ſupport him in indolence and diſſipation, he ſent him with letters of recommendation, and ſome traits of his diſpoſition, to a correſpondent in North America, hoping, that ſo diſtant a removal from his companions in iniquity, might be the means of reclaiming him, and prevent abſolute ruin.

When

When the veſſel in which he embarked arrived in the river Miſſiſſippi, and was obliged to come to an anchor, in order to wait for a fair wind to carry it to the deſtined port; part of the crew, with Florentius, went on ſhore to take a view of the adjacent country, which is ſaid to be beautifully romantic. They had not advanced any great diſtance from the ſhore, before they were attacked by a party of Indian banditti. The crew, with Florentius, made a gallant defence, but not being ſufficiently armed, and unequal to the number of the aſſailants, they were obliged to yield to the conquerors, and ſuch as ſurvived the combat were taken priſoners, amongſt which number Florentius was one.

It is a cuſtom with theſe lawleſs banditti, to lead thoſe they take priſoners in ſuch adventures in triumph

through their villages, where they expoſe the moſt valiant in oppoſing their attacks, to be wantonly tortured by the gathering croud; and Florentius, having moſt diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his valour, was ſingled out as the unhappy victim of their reſentment and cruelty. But juſt as they were proceeding to begin their barbarities, a female Indian, daughter to one of the chiefs, whoſe huſband had been killed in the late ſkirmiſh, being ſtruck with the beauty of his perſon, adopted him for her huſband, in the room of the deceaſed, which, according to the cuſtom of the country, ſhe had a right to do.

This circumſtance, though horrible to Florentius, was preferable to the tortures he muſt otherwiſe have undergone; he therefore yielded to it, and ſhewed a willingneſs to have the marriage

riage ceremony performed, which is made a joyful feſtival among theſe Indians, and by this ready compliance, he purchaſed liberty for his companions, though not for himſelf, and they were permitted to return to the ſhore, near which the ſhip lay at anchor.

Had Florentius been able to reconcile his mind to this adventure, he might have been happy; for this Indian female was beautiful in her perſon, not much older than himſelf, and being the daughter of a powerful and reſpected chief, ſhe was more civilized than the generality of ſuch Indian women, and appeared to have a heart ſuſceptible of the tender and generous paſſions. She idolized Florentius, and exerted all her powers to render herſelf beloved, and to contribute to his happineſs.—He was careſſed by her

relations and friends, who threw the wealth and luxuries of the country at his feet, and ſtrove, by every act of civility and kindneſs, to reconcile him to his ſituation.

All this proved ineffectual; the more he was careſſed by his wife and her friends, the more he appeared to deſpiſe and deteſt them; and conſidering this union from the firſt moment, as a matter of compulſion, he reſolved to revenge it, whenever a proper opportunity ſhould offer itſelf. He knew the neceſſity he was under of living with his wife, and hence, in public, he treated her with apparent reſpect; but in private, he did not heſitate to ſignify his hatred of her in the moſt cruel manner, which ſhe, from her great affection for him, concealed from her friends, being ſenſible they would have puniſhed his behaviour with

with the ſtricteſt ſeverity. In ſhort, ſo nobly generous was her whole conduct, that it ought to have rendered her the object of his eſteem and love, had her perſonal charms been leſs deſirable than they were. At length ſhe proved with child, a circumſtance which heightened her regard for him, though it encreaſed his averſion to her.

From the moment Florentius obtained his life by marrying the amiable Zephana (for that was her name) he reſolved, if poſſible, to make his eſcape from the country; but he was at firſt reſtrained from quitting the village, till it was known that his comrades, who were liberated, had reached their veſſel, and that they had left that part of the country. As ſoon as this prohibition ceaſed, he conſtantly viſited the place where he had landed with his

companions, hoping, one time or other, to ſee ſome veſſel on the coaſt, to which he ſhould be able to make a ſignal, and by that means effect an eſcape.—At length, after numberleſs unſucceſsful attempts, he diſcovered a ſhip at anchor very near the ſhore, to which he made ſignals for ſeveral hours, and at laſt obſerved ſome of the crew put off in a boat, toward that part of the land where he ſtood. He waited till they landed, and to his unſpeakable joy found they were his own countrymen, and that their ſhip was bound for England.

He related to them the hiſtory of his landing at that place, and the manner of his being taken priſoner by the Indians, but concealed the circumſtance of his marriage, though Zephana was then with him; for I muſt not omit to acquaint you, that this worthy

worthy creature conſtantly attended him, during the many excurſions he made to this place, and, ſolicitous for his eaſe and happineſs, had ever delighted to render him every kind and endearing office in her power, by collecting the moſt delicious repaſts the country afforded for the gratification of his appetite, and watching by him with the moſt vigilant attention, whenever fatigue, or the heat of the ſeaſon, inclined him to repoſe.

The boat's crew had obſerved his ſignals, and concluded, by his repeating them ſo frequently as he had done, that they were made by a perſon in diſtreſs, on which they readily went to his aſſiſtance; and after having heard his ſtory, made him an offer of his paſſage to England, as he expreſſed ſo ſtrong a deſire to return to it. This was joyfully accepted, and

he

he begged their ſtay while he went to fetch ſome things he wiſhed to take with him. On this he retired to a diſtant thicket with Zephana, where he ſtripped her of ſome valuable ornaments ſhe wore about her perſon.

Though this generous creature was unable to diſcover the particulars of what had paſſed between Florentius and the boat's crew, being totally unacquainted with the language, this laſt act of his led her to perceive what was intended. The thought of parting from the object of all her wiſhes and felicity, more eſpecially circumſtanced as ſhe was by her pregnancy, threw her into a ſituation of mind too horrible to be deſcribed. She proſtrated herſelf at his feet—begged not to be left behind, and as an inducement for him to comply with her requeſt, vowed to renounce every claim upon him

as

as a wife; nay, offered to ſwear eternal obedience and ſlavery to him, provided he would permit her to accompany him whitherſoever he was going. He was ſufficient maſter of her language, to underſtand the particulars of her intreaties, having been conſtantly inſtructed in it by her from their firſt connexion; but all ſhe could ſay proved inſufficient to intereſt his heart in her favour. He ſpurned her from him and left her, regardleſs of her tender ſolicitations and unparalleled diſtreſs.—Not diſcouraged by all this, ſhe followed him, and with wringing hands and lamentable cries, implored his pity.—She caught hold of his garment, when ſhe found him obdurate; and, at laſt, only begged he would embrace her at parting, but even this he had the brutality to refuſe; whereupon ſhe ſtruggled to obtain her wiſh by force, but juſt as ſhe threw

threw her arms about his neck, he drew a dagger from his ſide, and plunged it in her boſom; thus cruelly requiting as exalted an attachment as ever could be ſhewn by woman to man.—She expired in a few minutes, but with a look of affection and forgiveneſs, breathed her laſt breath in a prayer to heaven for his welfare and happineſs; while this monſter of ingratitude and barbarity heard the groan of expiration with unconcern, and without the leaſt perturbation, left her lifeleſs body a prey to the ferocious inhabitants of the woods, and haſtened to the boat, where he was received by the crew, and conducted on board the ſhip.

As it was his intention from the firſt hour of his union with Zephana, to quit her and the country whenever an opportunity offered, as we have hinted

hinted before, he took care to ſecure all the valuable effects ſhe poſſeſſed when he married her, and likewiſe what gold had been preſented to him by her relations and friends. Whatever of theſe were capable of being concealed, he conſtantly carried about him, and on his arrival in England, he ſold them for a conſiderable ſum, which had ſupported him to the time he became acquainted with Bellaria, when the whole was nearly exhauſted by a round of folly and extravagance; for he had commenced a fine gentleman, or, rather, what the world calls a man of the *ton*.

The charms of his perſon and the politeneſs of his addreſs, had made great impreſſion on Bellaria the firſt time ſhe met him; and as ſhe ſaw more of him, ſhe became more paſſionately enamoured. True it is, his appear-

appearance and deportment were ſo ſingularly ſtriking, that they might have engaged the notice and affection of a woman leſs diſpoſed to indulge thoſe ſenſibilities which love gives birth to, than Bellaria; ſo that her ſudden attachment cannot be a matter of wonder, eſpecially as ſhe was a ſtranger to his profligate and abandoned conduct; for he had the policy to conceal his real diſpoſition from thoſe he either feared, or hoped to be benefitted by. In ſhort, he artfully diſplayed himſelf to her in the moſt amiable light, which threw her entirely off her guard, and ſhe was eaſily led to perſuade herſelf, ſhe might ſafely truſt him with her perſon and fortune. He had ſufficient perſpicuity to diſcover her favourable opinion of him, and hence purſued her with unremitting attention, and repeated aſſurances, that the ſum of all his wiſhes and felicity

centered

centered in a connexion with her for life, in the union of marriage.

Bellaria's love was too ardent to admit of procraſtination. She conſidered her wealth of no importance, unleſs it contributed to the indulgence of her wiſhes. Neither was his age a matter of objection with a woman of her diſpoſition; though, as he knew the diſproportion of his age to her's, he pretended he was ſeven years older than he really was; an impoſition which was favoured by the effects of his having lived ſome time in America.

They were married in about a month after their acquaintance, and ſhe made him maſter of her whole fortune, without reſerve.—After the ceremony was performed, they retired to a country ſeat of her's, a few miles from town, and it is impoſſible to give a juſt

a juſt deſcription of Bellaria's felicity on the occaſion; therefore let it ſuffice to ſay, that ſhe flattered herſelf with an expectation, this match was founded on an union of ſentiment and a generous attachment, perfectly reciprocal.

On the morning after their marriage, Bellaria chanced to awake before Florentius, and as ſhe beheld the object of her felicity faſt bound by the fetters of repoſe, ſhe indulged herſelf in the pleaſure of viewing his beautiful features, with more attention than ſhe ever before had an opportunity of doing. She had not enjoyed this gratification many moments, before ſhe ſcreamed in the moſt violent manner and fainted.

Florentius was rouzed by the noiſe, and greatly alarmed on finding Bellaria

in

in ſuch a ſituation. He uſed every means in his power to reſtore her, but it was a conſiderable time ere ſhe recovered, when, in the agonies of the deepeſt diſtreſs and horror, ſhe ſaid, "O Florentius! Florentius! what a wretch am I!—I am now fatally puniſhed for all my tranſgreſſions!—Where ſhall I hide myſelf from heaven and thee!"

"Deareſt Bellaria," ſaid Florentius, "moderate your grief. I am on the rack to behold you thus diſtreſſed. Some idle dream muſt have occaſioned this diſturbance of mind, but being reſtored to your ſenſes, you ſhould conſider it as the deluſive phantom of the imagination. It is terrible to ſee you thus."—"Terrible indeed," replied Bellaria, "but my diſtreſs is not the effect of any deluſion; it ariſes from reality. Thou art innocent; it is I

alone who am guilty. That mark upon your breaſt, which I juſt now beheld, convinces me of a truth you are yet unacquainted with. O moſt unhappy young man, thou art wedded to thy mother! Thou art my ſon!—thou art my ſon!"—Here her diſtraction became inſupportable, and ſhe was thrown into a delirium, which laſted a conſiderable time.

When the efforts which were made to reſtore her to her ſenſes proved effectual, and her mind became ſomewhat compoſed, ſhe related the particulars of her incontinency with Lord Bellamont, with the circumſtance of the child's being conveyed from her, to prevent a diſcovery of her guilt; and aſſured Florentius ſhe was ſatisfied he was that ſon, notwithſtanding the account of his age did not agree with the age of her ſon, having imprinted

printed the mark on his breaſt herſelf, in a particular manner, ſoon after his birth, that it might be a means of diſcovering him, in caſe the embarraſſment of her ſituation at that time, ſhould be the means of his being loſt to her, which the circumſtance of Lord Bellamont's ſudden death had occaſioned.

Florentius ſtill thought Bellaria was miſtaken. He knew not how he came by the mark upon his breaſt, though, he had it from his infancy, and was perſuaded ſhe was deceived, becauſe his mother was then living; hence he was ſatisfied ſhe would be able to clear up the myſtery, and convince her he was not the perſon ſhe ſuppoſed him to be.——He had hitherto never mentioned his having a mother alive, on account of the meanneſs of her ſituation, but it now

became neceſſary to reveal this circumſtance.—An expreſs was immediately ſent to his mother, requeſting her attendance without delay.—She arrived with the meſſenger on his return, when Florentius acquainted her with what had happened, and deſired ſhe would ſatisfy Bellaria of her miſtake.

"That I ſhould do moſt willingly," ſaid the good old woman, "were it in my power, but I am ſorry to inform you it is not. Florentius, Madam, (addreſſing herſelf to Bellaria) is not my ſon, though I have adopted him as ſuch. He was brought to me a few days after his birth by a gentleman, to whoſe father my huſband had been a ſervant. He informed me the child was his, and that he had particular reaſons for wiſhing to conceal it from the world; on which account

count he desired me to bring it up as my own, for a time at least, which my husband, who was then alive, consented to, and we received a sum of money for that consideration. I never saw the gentleman afterward, for he did not long survive the time of this transaction. When we heard of his death, we made a strict enquiry of his servants concerning the mother of the child, but without success, for the affair was wholly unknown to his domestics. This being the case, I resolved to do the best I could for him, and though the loss of my husband, which happened soon after, greatly impoverished my circumstances, I endeavoured, as far as I was able, to prevent Florentius from feeling the loss of his real parents; and I concealed the knowledge of who he really was from him, because I apprehended the

diſcovery would not have contributed to his happineſs."

"Who was the gentleman?" ſaid Bellaria, with the utmoſt emotion. "Lord Bellamont," replied the old woman. "Gracious heaven!" cried Bellaria, "what a wretch am I!"—On her pronouncing theſe words, Florentius and ſhe gazed on each other with looks of aſtoniſhment and horror. A more terrible, or a more pictureſque ſcene was ſcarcely ever beheld.—Bellaria bewailed her deplorable ſituation, all the while fixing her eyes on Florentius with inexpreſſible tenderneſs, and in the height of her diſtraction, alternately calling him her huſband and her ſon, and conſidering him in either view loſt as ſoon as found.

He ſtood motionleſs, in a dreadful confuſion of horrid ideas. Every criminal

minal action of his life ſtarted into view.—His diſobedience to the good old woman who had adopted him for her ſon. His ingratitude to his friendly maſter, in the baſe advantage he had taken of his innocent daughter. His barbarity to the generous, amiable and faithful Zephana, to whoſe love he ſtood indebted for his life. And, laſtly, the horrid act of having committed inceſt with his own mother.—Theſe dreadful circumſtances filled his ſoul with diſtraction, and he experienced all the agonizing pangs ariſing from a conſciouſneſs of unprecedented guilt.

I will not tire you, (continued Mr. Cecil) with a further deſcription of this affecting ſcene, but conclude this melancholy narration by acquainting you, that the horrors of guilt led Florentius into a ſtate of deſperation,

from which he extricated himſelf by an act of ſuicide; and thus impiouſly ended a life of folly, miſtake and wretchedneſs.

This laſt circumſtance compleated the meaſure of Bellaria's wretchedneſs. She beheld herſelf with horror; and though ſhe did not venture to purſue the raſh ſtep Florentius had taken, yet, after providing for his foſter-mother by a handſome ſettlement for life, ſhe diſpoſed of all her ſplendid property, and retired to a monaſtery in France, there to ſpend the remainder of her days; which, in effect, was an inſtance of ſelf-murder, as well as that of Florentius, only under a different denomination.

I could have wiſhed, (ſaid Mr. Cecil) to have ſuppreſſed ſome particular parts of this ſtory, had they not been neceſſary

neceſſary to the progreſſive regularity of the whole; however, your good ſenſe will lead you to conſider them in the light I wiſh. And from hence you may learn, how greatly they miſtake the importance of perſonal beauty, who conſider it as the greateſt bounty of Providence. Beauty of perſon ought to be conſidered as a bleſſing by thoſe who enjoy it; yet it is by no means inſeparably connected with human felicity.—It may appear paradoxical when I aſſert, that one proof of its inſignificance is its being enjoyed but by a few; and hence, thoſe who do not poſſeſs it, have leſs reaſon to regret the want of it, than if it was beſtowed on the majority of the human ſpecies. And as a proof that it is not of the importance generally imagined, it ought to be remembered, that thoſe on whom it is beſtowed are

forbid

forbid, by the unalterable decrees of nature, to enjoy it long.——Female beauty is generally the ſource of vanity and miſtake. It has, undoubtedly, contributed to the proſperity and happineſs of ſome; but their number falls greatly ſhort of thoſe it has rendered miſerable.—Believe it, there are innumerable bleſſings far more deſirable than the charms of beauty, and many greater evils than the misfortunes of uglineſs or deformity.

The conduct and fate of Bellaria and Florentius, will teach you what dangers and miſeries are attendant on an indulgence in lawleſs pleaſures; and convince you, that if once you ſuffer yourſelves to be drawn away by the allurements of vice, there is no ſecurity of having it in your power to return to the abodes of virtue.—You may

may alſo learn from this narrative, that though Providence may ſometimes ſuffer the wicked to triumph, the puniſhment due to tranſgreſſion is only delayed to render it more terrific, or ſtrictly juſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR APOLOGIZES FOR INTRODUCING THE PRECEDING STORY, AND THEN PROCEEDS WITH THIS IMPORTANT HISTORY.

COULD an Author preciſely know the number of readers pleaſed and diſpleaſed with his writings, it is highly probable he would find the number of the latter greatly exceed that of the former.—However diſagreeable this circumſtance may be to the ſons of literature, they will find, on examination, that it happens too frequently to be diſputed; and it is a conſideration which ought to abate a large

large portion of that vanity moſt authors poſſeſs, and likewiſe lead them to aſcribe their frequent miſcarriages to their own inſufficiency, than to want of judgment in their readers.

The Author of this work can eaſily perſuade himſelf, that many of his readers will be diſſatisfied with the hiſtory of Bellaria and Florentius, related in the two laſt chapters, though the principal incidents are founded on facts; for he is conſcious that it has no more connexion with the hiſtory of The Libertine, or the Memoirs of the Montague family, than it has with the Don Quixotte of Cervantes, or Dean Swift's Tale of a Tub. But it is no uncommon thing for a perſon travelling a long journey, to make a few excurſions out of the direct road, in order to take a view of the moſt remarkable places and things belonging to

to the country through which he paſſes, by way of rendering the fatigue of travelling eaſy and agreeable. Thus, when an author ſits down to write one of thoſe familiar and valuable hiſtories called Novels, he ſhould endeavour, if he can, to amuſe his readers in the courſe of his narrative, with digreſſions and epiſodes, without which, few hiſtories, either real or fictitious, will give ſatisfaction in the peruſal. Theſe auxiliaries, therefore, may be compared to the traveller's occaſional excurſions from the direct road to the place where his journey is to end.

This conduct has been practiſed with good ſucceſs by ſeveral authors of note, and is ſimilar to the policy of our theatrical managers, who, from a conſciouſneſs that the dramatic poets of the preſent age poſſeſs but a ſmall portion, if any, of that genius and wit which

which adorned the dramas of the ancients, find it neceſſary, during the repreſentation of a modern play, to amuſe the audience with a dance, or an interlude, between the acts, in order to diſſipate unavoidable langour.

The reader will eaſily perceive the author's intention by this digreſſion, which will enable him to proceed with the hiſtory, as he ought to have done long ago.

When Frederic was detected at college with Miſs Brumpton, that is, when his viſitor, in appearance male, proved to be of the feminine gender, ſhame and fear made him reſolve to quit the univerſity. Had the advice of his father made the leaſt impreſſion, he would have perſuaded the young lady to return to her friends as ſoon as ſhe arrived; but he conſidered her purſuit

purſuit after him a circumſtance favourable to his wiſhes, and reſolved to make it ſubſervient to them, regardleſs of conſequences. She had gone too far to recede. She was with him alone, and ſecure, for a time, from the eye of obſervation. He was bleſſed by nature with all the powers of eloquence, which he employed with infinite art to ſoften, to allure, to win, and to enflame; till, at length, her admiration of his perſon got the better of every reſolution virtue had whiſpered in her ear.

On their intimacy being diſcovered, he propoſed flying to London from the chaſtiſement of his preceptors, and the purſuit of their friends. To this ſhe conſented without much perſuaſion.—They accordingly quitted Oxford, as ſoon as he had an opportunity of conveying his cloaths and other neceſ-

ſaries

ſaries from the college, and took their route by adverſe roads, in order to render all ſearch after them ineffectual.

The day after their arrival in town, he took a lodging for himſelf and his fair companion, who having reſigned herſelf to his power by the precipitate ſtep ſhe had taken, was obliged to yield to a requeſt he made during their journey, that ſhe would live with him in the character of his wife.

To do Miſs Brumpton juſtice, we are obliged to declare, that ſhe ſtrongly ſolicited it might be ſo in reality, but he did not now think this meaſure neceſſary; for ſhe had deſtroyed the influence ſhe once had over him, by her imprudence.—This proves how dangerous it is for the fair ſex to be inattentive to thoſe punctilios, which,

while they add to their dignity, are the firmeſt gurdians of their honour.

For a time the novelty of this connection had charms to render it ſuperior to every other conſideration; and while the indulgence of pleaſure ſtifled the conſciouſneſs of guilt, the young lady was perfectly reconciled to her ſituation. But, alas! there is ever a ſecret curſe attendant on the commiſſion of immoral actions. Frederic ſoon grew tired of a conqueſt he had obtained on ſuch eaſy terms; in conſequence of which, ſhe found her influence over him decreaſe daily, and though ſhe exerciſed every art and endearment to preſerve his attachment, ſhe perceived, to her unſpeakable mortification, the charm was broken which ought to have held him faſt. In ſhort, all her endeavours to render herſelf beloved, were conſidered as

reſtraints

reſtraints on his pleaſures and happineſs, and hence, diſguſt and hatred ſucceeded, and he ſoon reſolved to break off a connection which ceaſed to give him ſatisfaction. This he did in a ſhort time, and with the utmoſt indifference abandoned her, who had been the idol of his ſoul, to the horrors of a guilty conſcience, and the perſecutions of an unforgiving world.

CHAP. XII.

CONTAINING A FURTHER ACCOUNT OF THE CONDUCT OF OUR HERO.

WHEN Frederic parted from Miſs Brumpton, he deliberated what courſe he ſhould take.—Prudence and virtue whiſpered in his ear, "return to the univerſity;" but vice and folly ſaid, "ſtay where you are." He was conſcious of his error, and if he had not departed from his duty, he might probably have continued in the obſervance of it; but having broke through the boundary of obedience, he conſidered the ſeverity of a college life by no means ſuited to the levity of his preſent

preſent diſpoſition; for his connection with Miſs Brumpton, and the gay enchantments of pleaſure which then ſurrounded him on every ſide, had lighted up a flame not eaſily to be extinguiſhed. The path before him appeared pleaſant and eaſy of acceſs, while the proſpect behind was crouded with diſagreeable objects, and preſented itſelf as difficult and dangerous to approach. In ſhort, he fancied it ſo much more conducive to his felicity to go forward than to recede, that he reſolved to reſign himſelf to the direction of his paſſions, which had already gained the aſcendancy over every virtuous inclination.

He diſcharged the lodging where Miſs Brumpton and he had lived together, partly with a view of concealing himſelf from her, leſt her attachment to him, or her diſtreſſes on ac-

count of their ſeparation, ſhould have led her to be troubleſome; and partly through the fear, that her reſentment of his behaviour might prompt her to acquaint his father with the place of his reſidence; as either circumſtance would have ſtopped his intended career, and rendered thoſe ſchemes of pleaſure abortive, with which his imagination was pregnant.

His next ſtep was to take an elegant apartment at the court end of the town; and in conſequence of propagating a ſtory of his being heir to a conſiderable fortune, which he was ſhortly to poſſeſs, being nearly of age, he ſoon gained credit for cloaths and every other accommodation; for at the time he ſeparated from Miſs Brumpton, he had not more than fifty pounds left of the money he received from his father.

At

At this time he was only in the eighteenth year of his age, but the manlineſs of his perſon greatly favoured the account he had given of himſelf; for he was tall of ſtature, his ſhape aſcertained and finely proportioned, and his countenance ſtrikingly majeſtic.

"Black was his beard, and manly was his face."

To a perſon ſo engaging was added a dignified aſſurance, and pleaſantry of addreſs; and, as Virgil ſays of Æneas, nature had given "*his rolling eyes a ſparkling grace.*"—Theſe qualifications combined together, rendered him perfectly calculated for the meridian of female taſte. In ſhort, he appeared formed for love, and to inſpire it.

Frederic was ſenſible of his perſonal qualifications and accompliſhments, and as gallantry was now be-

come the predominant paſſion of his ſoul, he reſolved to embrace every advantage they might give him over the weakneſs, innocence, or partiality of the fair ſex; and, like a true libertine, he declared war wherever he went, againſt the chaſtity of maids, wives and widows.

In purſuance of this plan, he dreſſed in an elegant and ſplendid manner, not ridiculouſly, but with good judgment; which, to ſpeak the truth, he did not want on many other occaſions, had it not been obſcured by a vicious diſpoſition.

He frequented all public places, and the moment he fixed his eyes upon a pretty woman, he laid a plan for an attack upon her virtue; and ſuch was the influence of his perſonal charms, and the artifice of his ſchemes of addreſs,

dreſs, that he generally vanquiſhed where he beſieged. But this will not appear improbable, when the Reader is informed, the force of his penetration was ſo ſingular, he ſeldom failed of diſcovering the real ſentiments of thoſe he addreſſed, on the firſt interview; and, like an experienced general, he took care never to overſhoot himſelf by a precipitate attack, but always deliberated till there was little danger of a repulſe, and that the garriſon would ſurrender at diſcretion.

The ſucceſs of his amours rendered him vain in the extreme, and this vanity led him, like Alexander the Great, to conſider his glory and happineſs to be eſtimated only by the number of his conqueſts. This impious opinion ſpurred him on in his career, and contributed to the ruin of many amiable women, who otherwiſe migh have eſcaped the notice of this lawleſs invader.

Thus diſpoſed, neither the charms nor the diſtreſſes of thoſe over whom he triumphed, had any influence in ſecuring his fidelity and friendſhip. The end once obtained, indifference and deſertion ſoon ſucceeded.—This clearly proves, that licentious deſire has no alliance with the divine paſſion of love, in its original purity. The one, by gratification, corrupts the mind and alienates the heart from every generous affection; but the other becomes more refined by time, and unites the different ſexes by the moſt endearing of all obligations; and while it exalts the dignity of human nature, excites us to an imitation of the perfections of that Being to whom we are indebted for all our felicities.

Were we to enumerate the particulars of young Montague's amours, we ſhould tire the patience of our Readers,

ers, at the ſame time that it would be diſcloſing ſcenes too indelicate and too horrid for the obſervation of virtue and humanity. Let it ſuffice to ſay, he ſacrificed every generous and honourable conſideration to the deſires of his ruling paſſion, and became ſo loſt to the ſenſe of ſhame and ruin, as not to check the madneſs of his career, even when his money was exhauſted, and his credit ſunk to a very low ebb.

He ſoon found the means of a freſh ſupply impracticable, while the ſolicitations and threats of duns alarmed his pride and his fears; and his haughty ſpirit could not brook the thoughts of ſubmitting to the mortifying exigencies of life. He at laſt applied for aſſiſtance to ſome of thoſe gay companions, on whom he had beſtowed undeſerved favours; but they, like all falſe friends, turned his diſtreſſes into reproaches,

reproaches, and thus made them excuſes for their want of generoſity and gratitude.

All the ſchemes of pleaſure his luxuriant imagination had formed, now began to vaniſh, and finding himſelf ſinking into obſcurity and diſtreſs, he projected innumerable ſchemes for the relief of his affairs; but like moſt other projectors, he could not bring one of them to a ſucceſsful iſſue.

The expectations of his creditors were too repeatedly diſappointed, for them to remain long in a ſtate of inaction. He was arreſted at the ſuit of his taylor, and for want of money to diſcharge the demand, or friends to give ſecurity for it, he cloſed the ſcene of his adventures, thus far, in the King's Bench priſon.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

IN WHICH THE READER MAY PERUSE THE CONTINUATION OF YOUNG MONTAGUE'S ADVENTURES; OR, BY OMITTING IT, PASS ON TO OTHER MATTERS, FULL AS ENTERTAINING.

AS ſoon as Frederic took poſſeſſion of his new habitation, he began to reflect on the folly of his imprudent and abandoned conduct, and determined to amend his life, as moſt indiſcreet people do, when their ruin is too far accompliſhed for them to retrieve either the loſs of fortune or public credit.——He ſolicited indulgence from thoſe to whom he ſtood indebted,

indebted, and begged in the moſt preſſing terms for liberty, but his repeated breaches of promiſe proved a bar to their clemency, and he found every hope of kindneſs fruitleſs, which led him to experience the calamities attendant on a tainted reputation.—He might have pleaded his minority, and by that means invalidated the proſecution of his creditors; but ſuch a proceeding would have led to a diſcovery of who he really was, a circumſtance he dreaded to diſcloſe; for from the firſt of his commencing a man of the *ton*, he aſſumed a feigned name, with a view of concealing himſelf from any enquiry his friends might make after him.

His ſituation in the priſon, at firſt, was odious and horrible, till he obtained ſome money by the ſale of a diamond ring he had purchaſed of one of thoſe polite jewellers at the weſt end

end of the town, who make it their buſineſs to indulge the pride and vanity of young men of expectation, by ſelling them jewellery trinkets on credit, to be paid when they become of age, or are in poſſeſſion of their fortunes; for which civility they charge, in general, ten times the real value of the things they ſo diſpoſe of: a ſpecies of ſharpers not recognizable by law, known by the epithet of *bubble-boys*.

This money enabled him to rent one of the rooms with which priſoners, not reduced to the laſt extremity, are accommodated by the marſhal, or keeper; this rendered his ſituation more convenient and healthful, which contributed in ſome meaſure to reconcile him to his fate; nor was it long before the amuſements permitted in that place, and the politic maxims of his

his aſſociates hackneyed in the chicanery of injuſtice and profligacy, produced every ſpecies of conſolation.

One of the Greek poets obſerves, that "*ſhame greatly hurts, or greatly helps mankind*;" a remark founded on a thorough knowledge of the perfection and depravity of human nature. The former part of this obſervation was verified by the conduct of young Montague, for he ſoon became regardleſs of every honourable obligation, and in a ſhort time was confirmed in all thoſe vices, which before his initiation into the ſociety of the inhabitants of that place, hung but looſely on him. But inſtances of this nature are not to be wondered at, for our priſons may juſtly be termed academies of vice and fraud. And it ſeldom happens, that a man remains in one of them any length

length of time, without having his morals fatally corrupted, however virtuouſly diſpoſed before; for unleſs he is inflexible, he is ſoon ridiculed out of that conſcious ſhame ever attendant on the firſt entrance into a priſon, abſtracted from that compunction every honeſt man feels, when he ſuffers this kind of proſecution through inability to ſatisfy the juſt demands of his creditors.

What ſituation can there be more wretched, than that of being obliged to aſſociate with a ſet of wretches, who have generally bid adieu to honour and honeſty? Men poſſeſſed of minds wholly devoted to their own lawleſs purpoſes and intereſts; whoſe hearts are unſuſceptible of every humane and generous ſenſation; who delight in the ſeduction of the innocent and

the unwary, and gain proſelytes by flattering miſery with deluſive hopes of relief; by profeſſing what they do not mean, and promiſing that they are conſcious they cannot perform.

Frederic was obliged to ſupport an intimacy with men of this ſtamp, and under their direction was familiarized to all kinds of vicious and unlawful pleaſures, which may be purſued with as much impunity in a priſon, as in any other place whatever. And thus have many men, from the accidental circumſtance of being confined for a time in a priſon, been wickedly taught to diſregard the calls of honour; and, in contempt of the world, to ſquander in riot and debauchery, that which might have purchaſed the indulgence and mercy of their creditors, had it been properly applied, and have re-

ſtored

ſtored them to freedom, reputation and happineſs.

It would, doubtleſs, be a delicate matter to reſtrain thoſe amuſements and indulgencies, generally allowed perſons under confinement in our gaols, as ſome recreation may be neceſſary to render the miſeries of adverſity and the loſs of liberty ſupportable; but proper regulations reſpecting theſe particulars, are objects highly worthy the wiſdom and conſideration of the legiſlature; for when once attention to laudable purſuits is diſſipated by vice and folly, and the horrors of a priſon are by theſe means rendered familiar, the minds of men ſo circumſtanced, ſoon diſregard every idea of future welfare and happineſs; and by ſetting a ſeal on irrecoverable ruin, deprive the community of thoſe obligations

and advantages which are due from every individual.—But, to proceed.

By the time Frederic had purchaſed ſome neceſſary furniture for the room he hired, the money raiſed by the ſale of the diamond ring was all exhauſted, and he had no method of ſupporting himſelf and his pleaſures, but by an occaſional ſale of his fine cloaths, of which he had a profuſion. Some of theſe were very valuable; but as in the diſpoſal of them, his ſituation made it neceſſary for him to employ thoſe harpies who frequent priſons, and live by preying on the folly of the ignorant and the miſery of the unfortunate, he frequently found, to his unſpeakable mortification, that they ſeldom produced more than one ſixth part of their real value; but as this evil was without remedy, he was obliged to ſubmit to it.

Were

Were tranſactions of this nature more generally known than they are, they would produce higher inſtruction to our youth diſpoſed to diſſipation and the folly of wanton expence, than all the maxims of hoary wiſdom, or the admonitions of ancient experience; for example influences more than precept, becauſe what paſſes immediately before our own obſervation, makes a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind, and is more ſenſibly felt, than any occurrence can poſſibly do, which is only related to have happened.

CHAP. XIV.

THE READER WILL BE CONVEYED FROM LONDON TO YORKSHIRE, WITH MORE EXPEDITION AND LESS EXPENCE, THAN HE COULD, IF HE TRAVELLED IN A DILIGENCE, OR MAIL-COACH.

FROM the licentious and expenſive manner in which young Montague lived in priſon, he would ſoon have been reduced to the moſt neceſſitous circumſtances, notwithſtanding his great ſtock of cloaths when he firſt went there, had not the death of his father

father enabled him to recruit his finances.

When he read an account of that fatal occurrence in the public prints, that ſhock nature generally feels on ſuch occaſions, was prevented by the joyful expectation that this circumſtance would change the poſture of his affairs. Fluſhed with this hope, he employed a proper perſon to enquire in what manner his father had diſpoſed of his fortune; and when he found he had no claim to more than the legacy of five thouſand pounds, and not that till he came of age, he reprobated his father's conduct in terms too horrid for repetition, and without ſuffering the circumſtance of his being left ſo inconſiderable a legacy, to awaken remorſe for his undutiful and abandoned conduct, his thoughts were wholly employed re-

ſpecting the beſt method of diſpoſing of it, in order to obtain his liberty, and to purſue his pleaſures.

He applied to an advertiſing money-lender, and offered his legacy to ſale. This perſon, or rather this harpy, like the generality of that fraternity, raiſed numberleſs ſcruples reſpecting the hazard of the purchaſe, and threw a thouſand groundleſs objections in the way, till he had ſufficiently awakened Frederic's fears and provoked his impatience; and when he found him properly worked up to his purpoſe, modeſtly pretended to pity his ſituation and diſtreſs, and offered his friendly aſſiſtance, by propoſing the ſum of two thouſand pounds for the five, on condition he would inſure his life till he came of age out of it.

Frederic

Frederic was eager to be maſter of this ſum, and therefore inſtantly cloſed the bargain, without beſtowing a ſingle reflexion on the diſproportion it bore to what he gave up.

As ſoon as he received the money, he reſolved to make a figure in the faſhionable world; and amuſed himſelf with the moſt extravagant ideas during the time he was ſettling with his creditors and obtaining his liberty. In ſhort, he was inſtantly inſpired with new and romantic ideas of importance and pleaſure; and reſolved to give himſelf no concern about his ſiſters, nor to diſcover the ſtep he had taken in the diſpoſal of his fortune.

His paſſion for women became unbounded, and his vanity led him to imagine his perſon would captivate

vate every woman that beheld him, and render him irreſiſtible; but he found himſelf miſtaken, for the knowledge of his former lawleſs infidelity was too public, for him to be received with any degree of favour amongſt the virtuous part of the fair ſex, which reduced him to the neceſſity of purchaſing the intimacy of common proſtitutes, at the expence of his fortune and health. In which track we ſhall leave him for a time, while we make an excurſion to Yorkſhire, to viſit Mr. Cecil and his nieces.

The young ladies lived together in a very amicable manner, notwithſtanding they varied in their opinions, purſuits and amuſements, having the good ſenſe and liberality of diſpoſition to leave each other to freedom of inclination and choice.—Mr. Cecil ſeldom failed

failed viſiting them every day, and ſometimes their aunt accompanied him, though not often, her attention to the ſtudy of aſtrology employing the greateſt part of her time.

We have before obſerved, that the young ladies had many admirers ſoon after their father's death, and moſt of them made offers of marriage; but it ſo happened their propoſals were not accepted, either becauſe their perſons did not captivate the ladies, or their fortunes and connections were not approved of.——Charlotte had not turned her thoughts on matrimony, and Sophia was too young; but Emily and Harriet had privately reſolved to embrace the firſt offer agreeable to their own ideas. Beauty of perſon was the ſole object of their conſideration reſpecting a huſband, and they agreed

agreed to pleaſe their own fancy in this particular, without regard to other qualifications.——The circumſtance of their minority, and the neceſſity of obtaining their uncle's and aunt's conſent, had no weight with them, for as they were reſolved to pleaſe the eye, if they plagued the heart, a trip to Scotland would enable them to complete their wiſhes without the knowledge of their guardians; but they concealed their intentions from their ſiſters.

The Vicar of the pariſh where Mr. Cecil lived, had long entertained favourable ſentiments of Charlotte, but had never diſcloſed his mind to any one. He was about thirty years of age, and in the poſſeſſion of a good fortune, excluſive of his church-preferments.—He was a man of great erudition, ſtrict morals, poſſeſſed of a chearful

chearful diſpoſition, ſenſible without parade, liberal without oſtentation, and pious without either enthuſiaſm or hypocriſy.

Mr. Cecil and the Vicar were inſeparable companions, and there was a kind of generous contention conſtantly ſubſiſting between them, which ſhould moſt contribute to the pleaſure and happineſs of each other.

Mr. Temple (for that was the Vicar's name) took an opportunity to inform Mr. Cecil of his wiſh to have his permiſſion to addreſs Charlotte as a lover.—His friend appeared highly pleaſed with the requeſt, and aſſured him it would be perfectly agreeable to him, if he could engage the affections of his niece; but declared he would not attempt to uſe his influence in his behalf,

behalf, or aſſume any kind of authority in the affair.

While they were treating of this matter, news was brought, that a company of players were arrived at the neighbouring market town, and were to perform Shakeſpear's tragedy of Romeo and Juliet that evening.—Mr. Cecil propoſed that Mr. Temple and he ſhould take a walk to the young ladies, and give them an invitation to the play. This was accordingly done, and as it was a welcome offering it was readily accepted.

Miſs Cecil declined going, being deeply engaged in calculating the nativities of her nieces. And ſhe obſerved, that the ſcene of the play was laid in a popiſh country, the characters all papiſts, and ſhe deteſted the very name

name of popery. The tragedies of Hamlet, King Richard the Third, and Macbeth, ſhe ſaid, were her favourites, as ſhe loved to indulge her admiration in the ſolemnity of ghoſts, and incantations of witches, and when theſe were performed, ſhe promiſed to make one of their party. The reſt went to the play, which was well performed in the principal characters, and the audience expreſſed a general ſatisfaction.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

CONTAINING AN EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT, WHICH CONCLUDES THIS VOLUME.

THE arrival of the players was a pleaſing circumſtance to our young ladies, for as their ſituation was not far from the town where they were, they determined to go every night; and as Mr. Cecil thought the repreſentation of a good play a pleaſing and rational entertainment, he encouraged their going, and generally went with them, the Vicar always making one of the party.

The

The players found this a beneficial company, and therefore frequently waited on the young ladies with a liſt of their ſtock pieces, that they might appoint ſuch plays as they moſt approved, but they were generally divided in their choice. Charlotte and Sophia choſe the ſentimental pieces; Emily and Harriet thoſe abounding with wit, humour and intrigue. They had alſo their favourite actors and actreſſes; and this difference in opinion and taſte, afforded them ſubjects for diſputation, which, however, they always maintained with moderation of temper and good humour.

One evening, when Cibber's comedy of Love Makes a Man; or The Fop's Fortune, was to be performed, the theatre was crowded and the audience reſpectable. The play not be-

ginning at the uſual time, the houſe began to expreſs an impatience; on which the maſter of the company came upon the ſtage and informed the audience, that the actors who were to play the parts of Don Carlos and Clodio, had neglected to attend, and as their characters were the moſt important in the piece, he was under the neceſſity of diſmiſſing the houſe, and humbly hoped the audience would pardon the diſappointment, which he apprehended had ariſen from ſome unforeſeen accident. The company expreſſed their diſapprobation and retired.

Part of our family was there that night, and Charlotte did not much regret the diſappointment, as ſhe went rather againſt her inclination, her ſiſters Emily and Harriet having been indiſ-

indiſpoſed that afternoon, which obliged them to decline going; ſhe therefore returned home with Sophia, her uncle and the Vicar, and it was agreed to make a party at quadrille, by way of paſſing the evening, as it had been ſet apart for amuſement.

On their arrival they found, on enquiry, the two ſick ladies were better, and had walked out for the benefit of the air. This being the caſe, Mr. Cecil agreed to play at cards, that Charlotte, Sophia and the Vicar might not be diſappointed of their intended pool, otherwiſe he would have declined it, as he very rarely amuſed himſelf with cards.

As Emily and Harriet were not returned when ſupper came upon the table, Charlotte expreſſed great ſur-

prize and uneaſineſs at their abſence; but Mr. Cecil obſerved, that probably they had walked to ſee their aunt, who had detained them to ſupper, knowing it would be late ere the play could be over. However, a ſervant was diſpatched after them, who returned with an account of their not having been at Mr. Cecil's. On this Charlotte, burſt into a flood of tears, and ſaid, "alas! my fears are realized, they are gone from happineſs and me."

On being deſired to explain herſelf, ſhe informed her uncle, that ſince the players came into the country, they had been ſingularly partial to the actors who were abſent from the theatre that evening; that ſhe had detected Emily and Harriet walking in the fields with them ſeveral times, and putting all circumſtances together, ſhe was

was ſatisfied they were ſeduced into ſome ſcheme of elopement.

Mr. Cecil and the Vicar joined in this opinion, and therefore thought it adviſeable to go immediately, though at a late hour of the night, to the maſter of the theatre, in the hope of getting ſome intelligence reſpecting the abſence of theſe men. They ſet off accordingly, but, on enquiry, found he was unable to afford any hint that promiſed to be uſeful. The character he gave of them was very unfavourable, abſtracted from their theatrical abilities; for he aſſured Mr. Cecil, they were both men of a diſſipated and debauched turn of mind, and if they had inveigled themſelves into the eſteem of the young ladies, it was a very unfortunate circumſtance, as they were deſtitute of every principle.

ciple of honour and honeſty. He further added, on their abſenting themſelves from their buſineſs that evening, he had been to their lodgings, where he found, to his ſurprize and mortification, they had taken all their cloaths away, and left word they ſhould not return again.

It was now evident Charlotte's conjectures were true, and that the ladies had decamped with the players. An enquiry was made at all the inns in the town, whether ſuch perſons had hired carriages and gone from thence that afternoon, but no intelligence whatever could be obtained, ſo as to judge of the beſt ſtep to be taken in purſuit of them; and though the moſt probable conjecture was, that they had ſet out for Scotland to ſecure a marriage, they had been abſent too many hours

hours to hope for any ſucceſs in going after them; ſo that Mr. Cecil and the Vicar gave the matter up, and returned back to comfort the diſconſolate ſiſters.

Charlotte and Sophia were inconſolable, when they found no intelligence could be gained reſpecting the fugitives; and Miſs Cecil, who was juſt arrived as her brother returned, exclaimed againſt the conduct of her rebellious nieces in the moſt outrageous terms. She obſerved, that the honour of her ancient family, which had been preſerved inviolate from the days of William the Conqueror to the preſent time, was now ſtained beyond all hope of redemption. That the immaculate blood of the Cecils, ennobled in hiſtoric pages, was now contaminated; and concluded all by

ſaying, ſhe foreſaw ſome terrible event would happen, having ſeen two ugly ſtrangers in the candle the laſt night, and that two ravens aroſe before her as ſhe took her accuſtomary walk that morning.

Notwithſtanding Mr. Cecil's diſtreſs of mind on the event which had happened, he laughed heartily at this ridiculous jargon, and the Vicar, with all his gravity, could ſcarcely refrain from it.

The lady perceiving her obſervations, as uſual, met with the ridicule of her brother, addreſſed herſelf to the Vicar, who heard all ſhe had to ſay with great compoſure.—" You muſt know, Sir," ſaid ſhe, " that my brother is an athieſt, or an infidel at leaſt, and has no faith in the glorious and heavenly

venly art of aſtrology and divination, though I have ſo frequently foretold him of future events."

"No ſiſter," replied Mr. Cecil, "if you had ever foretold by your art any one circumſtance which really happened, I then ſhould have paid the higheſt reſpect to your knowledge. But you never yet propheſied right. You always maintain your ſigns and tokens after things have happened, when we are as well acquainted with them as yourſelf."

"Merciful heaven!" replied ſhe, with great warmth, "how can you do me ſo much injuſtice, brother? Did not I obſerve that the candles burnt blue the night before my ſiſter Montague died?—Did not I then ſay we ſhould have a death in our family?—

You

You laughed at me, but you know my ſiſter died the next morning. And further, Sir, I told you of my being croſſed by a hare on the very day Mr. Montague died in the evening. You ſurely cannot forget theſe things?"

"I do not forget them," replied Mr. Cecil, "and if you had mentioned in theſe inſtances, who of the family would have died, I ſhould have paid ſome credit to what you then ſaid; but as you have ever been making obſervations about candles, the fire, and numberleſs other things, it is impoſſible but ſome event muſt happen nearly at the ſame time.—Now you have been ſome months caſting the nativities of our nieces, in order to foretel their future fortunes, yet I do not underſtand you had any knowledge of what has juſt happened."

"There

"There you are miſtaken, brother," replied ſhe, for this morning, from my chamber window, I ſaw two hawks deſcend and carry away two of my chickens, on which event I ſaid to myſelf, this foretels, that two raviſhers will come and ſteal away two of my nieces, and now you ſee I was right."

"If ſuch were your thoughts," ſaid Mr. Cecil, "it would have been wiſe in you to have ſuggeſted the hint, as it might have put us on our guard. But, in ſhort, ſiſter, you only interpret, and do not foretel.—Now, can you inform us by your art, where Emily and Harriet are, or what ſtep they have taken? Are they gone to Scotland to marry the players, or are they ſeduced away for baſer purpoſes?"

"That

"That is as it may hereafter prove," replied ſhe; "there are things to be known, and things not to be known. It is improper we ſhould have a knowledge of all future events."

"There I agree with you," ſaid Mr. Cecil, "and therefore, my dear ſiſter, after the confeſſion you have now made, why will you diſtract the preſent moments, by a fruitleſs enquiry after future events? It is idle, ridiculous, and I had almoſt ſaid impious."

"It may be ſo in your opinion, brother," replied Miſs Cecil, "but notwithſtanding your infidelity, I would have you to know, there is more real knowledge in a grey gooſe quill, a clean hearth, and a ſieve full of aſhes, than

than the univerſities of Oxford and Cambridge have to boaſt of."

This laſt aſſertion was ſpoken with ſuch ſolemn confidence, as ſtrongly excited the riſibility not only of Mr. Cecil, but of the Vicar likewiſe, which greatly offended the lady, who called them a couple of infidel heretics, and ſaid, ſhe much doubted whether either of them would ever enter the kingdom of heaven.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.